METAL GEAR SOLID 2:

70 New Screens! We study the Trailer Frame-By-Frame

PSM

100% independent PlayStation Magazine

PlayStation's LAST FINAL FANTASY

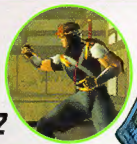
It broke sales records in Japan, and now FFIX is heading our way!

- First Impressions: The best ever?
- Tons of exclusive new Screens
- Square interview & New Features

SPECIAL FEATURE

Why PS2 Will DESTROY Dreamcast, X-Box & Dolphin

PS2 News:



- DOA2: Hardcore
- Arcade PS2
- Robotech on PS2

HOT for PlayStation:

- Parasite Eve 2
- Madden 2001
- Spyro 3
- Mega Man X5

BEST SELLING PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE!

SEPT '00 | ISSUE 37 | VOL. 4

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PlayStation

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Animated Blood and Gore

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PlayStation 2

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Hundreds of games come and go each year ...But how many reach nine installments?

WELCOME!

The world's top RPG series is calling it quits on PlayStation, but it's going out with a bang!

When I think of what Square has accomplished with *Final Fantasy* on the PlayStation, it blows my mind. The series was already a hit in Japan where RPGs have ruled for years, but it wasn't until the PS that *FF* reached a similar level of success worldwide.

Now, after three classic titles, the PlayStation chapter of the *Final Fantasy* saga is nearing its end. I'm excited to see *FFX* and *XI* on PS2, but a part of me is also a little sad to see this era end.

Well, I can't get *too* misty-eyed yet, because I've still got *FFIX* to play! From what I've seen so far, it's much funnier and faster-paced than the last two, which has got me really excited. I can't wait for the English translation!

So, enjoy this issue's *FFIX* coverage, and the other cool stuff we've packed into this issue!

Chris Slate, HP: 100 / MP: 50

THIS MONTH'S COVER

We take pride in having quality original artwork, to present our magazine at the highest possible level.

Right from the start, we knew that Arthur Adams was the perfect choice to do this month's cover. Why? Aside from his incredible talent, Art illustrated the *Final Fantasy VII* cover for our very first issue. Plus, his amazing rendition of *FFVIII*'s Squall for our Top 10 Character feature last issue left us drooling to see more — and we certainly weren't disappointed! So, thanks again for an amazing job, Art! You rule!

▲ Art's first sketch was right on the money — the whole gang is there in full glory, with plenty of room left on the left for text. The illustration's a bit squished from being faxed, though.

▲ Here's the colored image, but without a background. We weren't sure if we'd use a background or not, so it was done on a different layer so that it could be easily removed.

▲ The final colored image, with a background. As a total picture it looks better with a background, but as this is being written, a final decision hasn't been made on which version will appear on the cover.

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100% Independent PlayStation Magazine

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MEET THE PSM TEAM:

CHRIS SLATE
Editor-In-Chief

Likes: All types of games
Hobbies: Comics, hoops, J-Pop
What's the coolest magic item you own? I've got a +10 basketball that has an extra 10% chance of going in! But, er, keep that between us, okay?

STEPHEN FROST
Senior Editor (Reviews/Previews)

Likes: Fighting Games, RPGs
Hobbies: Cleaning CDs
What's the coolest magic item you own? Well, that would have to be my special CD cleaner that changes really bad games into good ones.

RANDY NELSON
News Editor

Likes: Shooters, Racing, Platform
Hobbies: WWF, Action Figures
What's the coolest magic item you own? Definitely my Bag of Invisible Thumbtacks. You should see the guys when they try and sit down around here. What a hoot!

BANZAI CHIBI CHAN
Barely Employed Mascot

Likes: ALL GAMES!!!
Hobbies: Games and GAMES!
What's the coolest magic item you own? I've got the world's only working pair of X-Ray glasses. I can spend all day in Ginza just watching *kawaii* girls shop for clothes!

BILL DONOHUE
Managing Editor

What he does:
Screams about deadlines and at the writers who miss them.
What's the coolest magic item you own? When I was younger, I had one of those Magic 8 Balls. I'd ask a question, and it would give me a funny answer. However, now that I'm older, I usually just do what it says...
Bill's Quote of the Month:
"Stop screaming, ladies! The Magic 8 Ball said to come in here. Yes, it also said to take off all my clothes... "

EUGENE WANG
Art Director

What he does:
Seathes... (I asked Eug about this answer, but he just sat there, staring at me and... um, seething — Ed.)
What's the coolest magic item you own? My bottomless cup of coffee. It sounds great, and it is for the most part, but the downside is that it usually gets knocked over on my desk, leading to brown wrinkled copies of PSM and Cat Fancy.
Eug's Quote of the Month:
"Clean up on aisle 1."

GARY LIEW
Graphic Designer

What he does:
Ensures PSM will have the best looking pages ever!
What's the coolest magic item you own? I am the mystical owner of the Magic Metal Water Snake. I know you are being amazed, but when I pull on his wings, he sprays water! It will be hot or cold, depending on which wing I pull. Too bad only I can have one in my kitchen and not you!
Gary's Quote of the Month:
"Hot... *AND* cold... AIEEE!"

PSM IS 100% INDEPENDENT

So, which magazine is best for you, Official or Unofficial? That's easy. You want independent, unbiased coverage, and you want to know that what you're reading is nothing but the truth. You can only get this with an UN-official magazine. An official book has to answer its Corporate Sponsor. And whose best interests do you think they're looking out for?

PSM is created by us and no one else. Nobody has to approve our pages before they're printed and nobody, not anybody, can make us say what we don't believe to be true. We write about what we want to and put what we want on our cover.

This is the kind of honest, straightforward coverage that you can only get with an unofficial magazine. We understand that our readers come first, and we would never, EVER betray your trust. This is our promise to you, the hard-core PlayStation gamer, who deserves nothing less.

12090 a.d.

10,000 years have passed since the final war brought the history of the human race to its end. Since that time, vampires have reigned over the world. But now they are dying as a species–this is their final hour. The humans are regaining their power after many long dark years. However, some vampires remain in the remote region and continue their horrific attacks against humans. Such action has brought about the hiring of bounty hunters to destroy them. Among these hunters, the Dunpeals, half vampire and half human, are considered the finest. In time, people began to talk about a hunter with remarkable skills...

That hunter is D... Vampire Hunter D...

The adventure begins...

PlayStation

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MATURE M

Animated Blood
Animated Violence

ESRB

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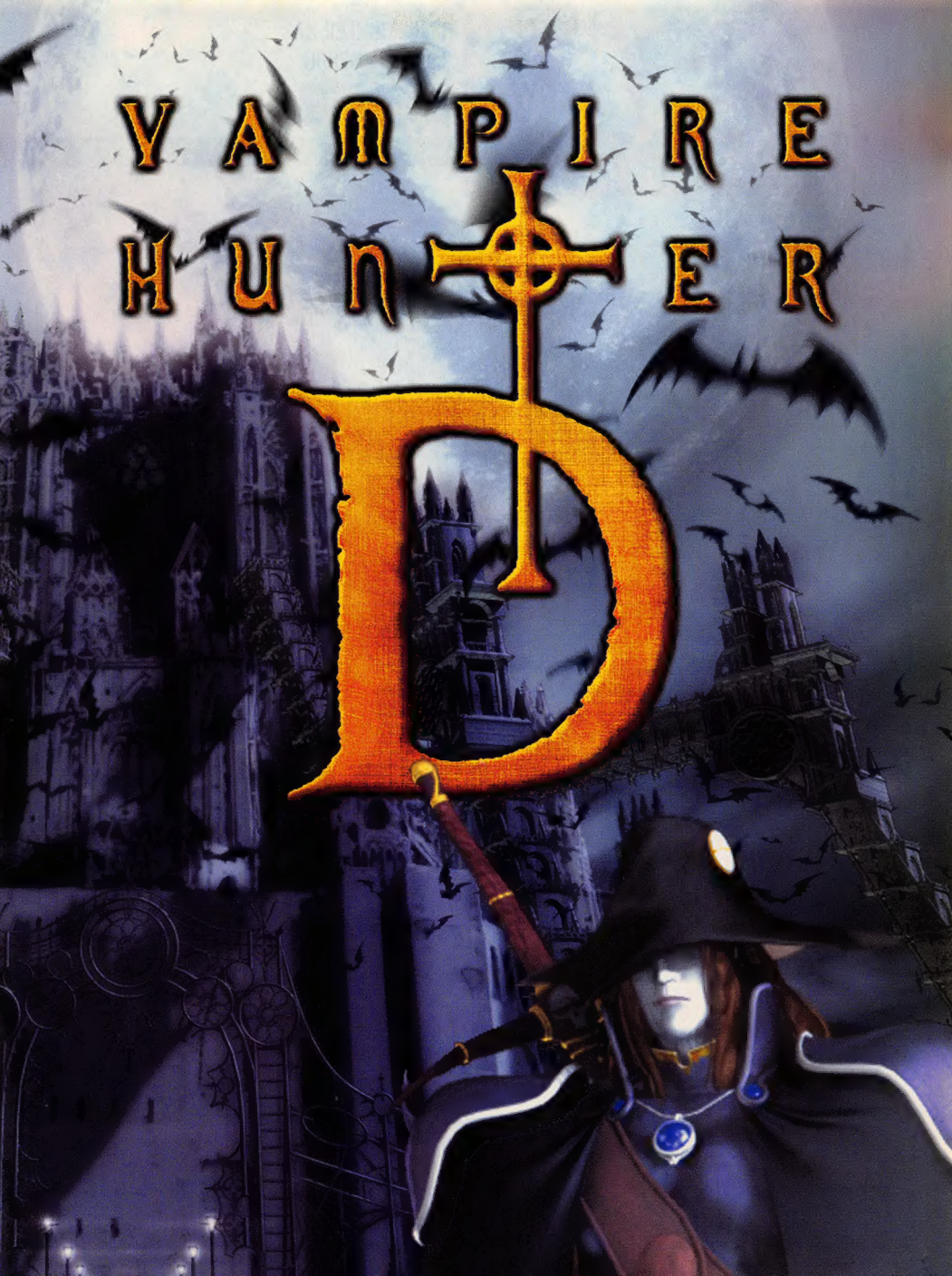

VAMPIRE
HUNTER
D

PSM
100% independent PlayStation Magazine
ISSUE NUMBER 37
September 2000
imagine MEDIA WITH PASSION

Armored Core 2

pg. 46

Although mech games have never received a popular following in the U.S., From Software may gain a few fans when it releases its mech game this fall. If the already crisp graphics don't attract gamers, *Armored Core 2*'s fast-paced gameplay will. The heavy metal rocks on page 46.

Dynasty Warriors 2

pg. 36

Set in ancient China during the same time period as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* series, *Dynasty Warriors 2* puts you directly onto the field of battle as one of nine legendary Chinese warriors, responsible for aiding in your kingdom's victory. Your forces await you on page 36!

BACK IN ANCIENT CHINA, US **HOT BABES** HAD TO DEFEND THE LAND WITH NOTHING BUT OUR **SWORDS** AND **CLEAVAGE.**

Midnight Club

pg. 41

Midnight Racer hopes to blow past its stiff competition to be the top racer on the PlayStation2. Although surpassing hit franchises like *Ridge Racer* and *Gran Turismo* will be quite a task, *Midnight Club* includes a few elements that set it apart from the rest. Your sweet ride is parked over on page 41!

VROOM!

COVER STORY

FINAL FANTASY IX

The RPG of the year is here! Square has given us one last Final Fantasy on the PlayStation, and boy, is it a doozy! We've got a Q&A interview with the creators behind the game, plus a picture-packed preview with our first impressions!

pp. 24, 70

THERE GOES MY LAST SHRED OF RESPECT FOR SPELL CASTERS.
YES VIVI, YOUR SPELL IS WORKING -- I CAN SEE THROUGH CLOTHING AS IF IT WERE TISSUE PAPER!
WAIT, IS THAT... BILL DONOHUE?! VIVI, TURN IT OFF, TURN IT OFF!

Motor Mayhem

pg. 44

There still hasn't been any word of a PlayStation2 version of either *Twisted Metal* or *Vigilante 8*, which is kind of disappointing. However, that doesn't mean the console won't have a car combat title in the near future. Don't try crossing page 44 without looking both ways!

Main Menu

Letters ► pg. 98 ◄

monitor ► pg. 14 ◄

The latest PlayStation news and up-to-the-minute info

- News ► pg. 14 ◄
- Q&A ► pg. 24 ◄

reviews ► pg. 49 ◄

This month's new games, thoroughly tested by PSM experts

previews ► pg. 70 ◄

All the best dirt on tomorrow's hottest games

- Army Men: Air Attack 2 ► pg. 80 ◄
- Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX ► pg. 84 ◄
- Destruction Derby Raw ► pg. 74 ◄
- FFIX ► pg. 70 ◄
- Incredible Crisis ► pg. 80 ◄
- Madden NFL 2001 ► pg. 86 ◄
- Mega Man X5 ► pg. 82 ◄
- MTV Sports Skateboarding ► pg. 74 ◄
- MTV Sports Pure Ride ► pg. 83 ◄
- NASCAR 2001 ► pg. 86 ◄
- Parasite Eve 2 ► pg. 78 ◄
- Sheep ► pg. 83 ◄
- Spyro: Year Of The Dragon ► pg. 76 ◄

code junkies ► pg. 91 ◄

The latest codes for all you addicts

letters ► pg. 96 ◄

You've got questions, we've got answers

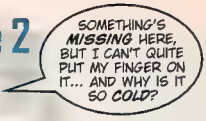
Game Index

Alundra 2	pg. 93	Motor Madness	pg. 44
Armored Core 2	pg. 46	Ms. Pac-Man Maze	pg. 50
Army Men: Air Attack 2	pg. 80	MTV Skateboarding	pg. 74
Ball Breakers	pg. 50	MTV Sports Pure Ride	pg. 83
Dave Mirra BMX	pg. 84	NASCAR 2001	pp. 44, 86
Destruction Derby Raw	pg. 74		
Dune 2000	pg. 92	NCAA GameBreaker 2001	pg. 51
Dynasty Warriors 2	pg. 36	NCAA Football 2001	pg. 52
FFIX	pg. 70	NFL GameDay 2001	pg. 59
Gekido	pg 92	Nightmare Creatures 2	pg. 91
Glover	pg. 91	Parasite Eve 2	pg. 78
Grind Session	pg 91	Rampage Through Time	pg. 51
Incredible Crisis	pg. 80	Ready To Rumble 2	pg. 43
Kessen	pg. 42	Sheep	pg 83
Kurt Warner Football	pg. 92	Silent Scope	pg. 31
Madden NFL 2001	pg. 86	Smuggler's Run	pg. 42
Mega Man X5	pg. 82	Spyro 3: Dragon	pg. 76
MGS2:TSOL	pg. 32	Street Fighter EX Plus	pg. 92
Midnight Club	pg. 41	Valkyne Profile	pg 55
MK Special Forces	pg. 56	X-Men Mutant Academy	pg. 56

next issue ► pg. 105 ◄

A sneak-peek at what's gonna be not for next month

Parasite Eve 2 ► pg. 78 ◄

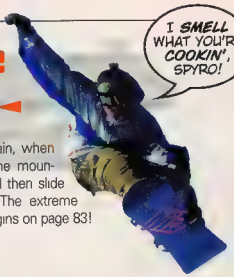


The NMC's are airborne! Once this deadly virus enters the body, it begins mutating the organism's DNA, which alters the animal into a monster. Although many monsters are mutated beyond recognition, it appears that everything from people to elephants make an appearance in *Parasite Eve 2*. The mutations are gathering on page 78.

Spyro: Year Of The Dragon ► pg. 76 ◄

Who would've thought that a little dragon who can barely fly would complete his first adventure, let alone go on to star in two sequels? Now on his third outing, Spyro has a much larger world to explore and new tasks to complete. The adventure begins on page 76!

MTV Sports Pure Ride ► pg. 83 ◄



Why just snowboard down a mountain, when you can build the mountain first and then slide down it? The extreme action begins on page 83!

ANARCHY

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Rob VAN DAM

I will not conform to your rules.

Not in the ring. Not out of it.

The weak obey the law. I break it.

I do not believe in mercy.

I have become victorious by any means necessary.

By folding chair and kendo stick.

By fire and tables.

I believe in creative weaponry.

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PlayStation

Sega Dreamcast.

TEEN T

Animated Blood
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes

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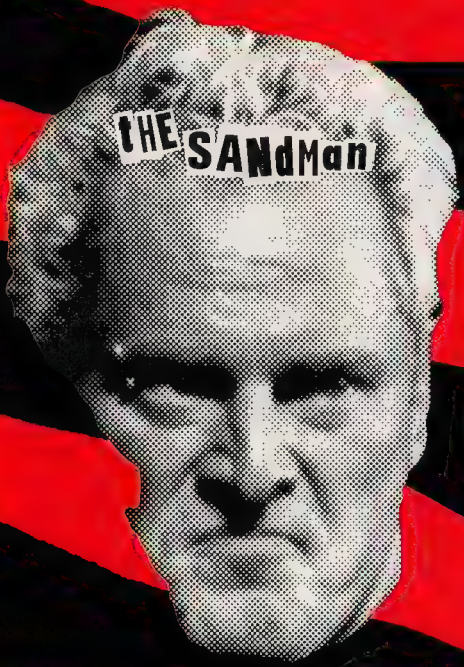

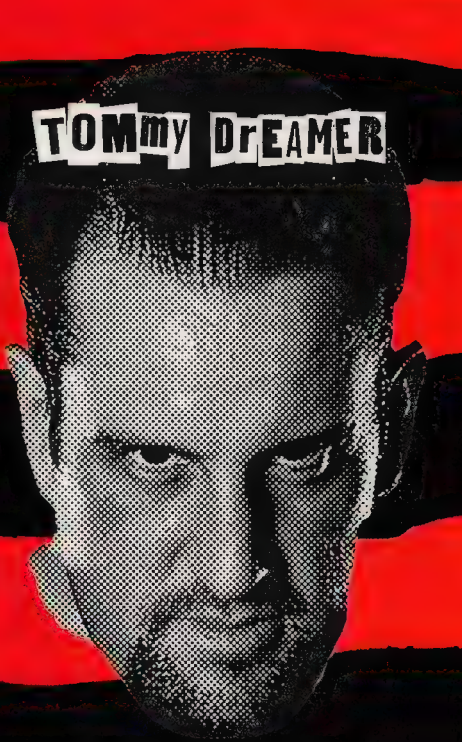

Ring Entrance Cinemas • Fight Intros from Bang and One Minute Silence! • 2-man commentary by Joey Styles & Joel Gertner!

Extreme Championship Wrestling.
No rules. No limits. No pity.

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MONITOR

your complete source for all the latest in playstation news, topics, and 32-bit culture

These days, daily news is only a click away on the Internet. But what you *can't* get online is PSM's exclusive in-depth coverage, with more details and extra info. We dig deep to find the *real* story behind the headlines.

FIRST NEWS: Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore

The full scoop on Tecmo's new US-only version of its sizzling PS2 fighter, straight from the man who's creating it

Released yet another version in Japan, the PlayStation2 version of Tecmo's eye-popping arcade fighter, *Dead or Alive 2*, arrived bearing new stages and other PS2-exclusive features not found in the coin-op. Rather than simply re-release this version stateside, however, Tecmo has announced that an entirely new US-only game entitled *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore*, will make a presence felt shortly after PS2 hits shelves here at the end of October.

In addition to a completely rewritten graphics engine designed to take full advantage of PS2, Tecmo promises that the game will boast a number of new features not seen in the Japanese release or the Dreamcast version. To find out exactly what we can [illegible] its latest creation.

◀ **Tomonobu Itagaki, head of Tecmo's elite Team Ninja, is currently working on *Ninja Gaiden* for PS2 in addition to *DOA2: Hardcore*.**

PSM: Will all of the new elements and special effects that you originally wanted to include in the Japanese version of *DOA2* for PS2 make it into *DOA2: Hardcore*? Can you list all of the new elements you're planning to include in the game?

Itagaki: Definitely, yes. Since the release of *Dead or Alive 2* on PS2 in Japan and Dreamcast in the U.S., I've received much feedback from the fans of *DOA2*. I've personally reviewed this feedback to gain ideas for improving *DOA2: Hardcore* for the U.S. market. We're basically rebuilding this game from ground up.

Here is everything that I'm planning to include in the game at the moment:

- A newly developed graphics engine. This results in a great improvement in the graphic quality that is different from the Japanese version.
- Voice-overs recorded by American voice talents.
- A new intro movie
- A new ending movie for Story Mode
- New costumes
- New fighting arenas and improved existing ones
- New attacks
- A "real ending" will be added at the end of Story Mode, when the player succeeds in clearing all stages with all available characters.
- New play modes

PSM: Since the game has "hardcore" in the title, does this mean we can expect it to feature any of the more "mature" elements censored out of the U.S. version of *DOA2* for Dreamcast? Can we expect the female fighters to be even more "bouncy" than in earlier versions?

Itagaki: I can't say that there will be more "mature" elements. But the better visuals and controls will translate to more a realistic look and feel of the *DOA2: Hardcore* girls. Do you want more "bounce?" I think that the current versions have just the right amount of bounce, that is, if you're talking about silicon implants. Besides, I want you to concentrate on the fight, not on other "things."

▲ **The new stages added for the Japanese release (shown) will be present, as will some all-new arenas to fight in. According to Tecmo, the existing stages will also all be enhanced in some way.**

PSM: Can we expect any new characters to make an appearance? Will we finally be able to play as the evil Tengu? How about characters from other Tecmo games?

Itagaki: I wish I could tell you all about my secret plans, but I can't. Let me just say that everything you've mentioned is possible.

PSM: Will you now be able to play on any background in the tag battle mode?

Itagaki: So many of my fans have requested that. I can't tell you for certain if we can do it but it would be really cool to be able to play tag battle on multiple stages.

PSM: How much of the new rendering engine has been coded from scratch, and what exactly can it do that the old one couldn't? Will the game use PS2's anti-aliasing functions, for instance?

Itagaki: Whenever Team Ninja works on a different version of a game, I take the game apart completely and rebuild it from scratch. It's kind of like rebuilding a Formula 1 car after each race to make adjustments and improvements to make the car faster. I'm very aware of the anti-aliasing issue and I will do everything necessary to address the issue.

PSM: What about new story sequences? Will we finally get to learn more about the characters?

Itagaki: My Japanese *DOA2* fans are totally fascinated with the story of the *DOA2* characters. I'm hoping to do the same with my American fans with *DOA2: Hardcore*. Yes, there will be more cinema modes to let you understand the extraordinary story of *DOA2*.

PSM: Now that you've spent a good deal of time developing for PS2, have you discovered anything new about the system you didn't know it could do before, or ways to overcome the hurdles you experienced when developing the Japanese version of *DOA2*? Has your overall opinion of the hardware's capabilities changed at all?

Itagaki: I really never had any problems with development, aside from never having enough time to perfect a game (Of course, any developer who says they reached perfection has a problem!) *DOA2: Hardcore* will be one of the few PS2 titles to be developed on the DVD format. Actually, the DVD format not only increases storage capacity, but with a proper programming technique, will increase the visual quality and gameplay over CD-ROM format games. This will be quite apparent when you compare *Tekken Tag Tournament* (CD-ROM) with *DOA2: Hardcore* (DVD).

Sounds great! We'll have more info on *DOA2: Hardcore* as its release draws closer!

▲ **The Japanese version of DOA2 (shown here) looked great, and Itagaki promises that *DOA2: Hardcore* will look event better, thanks to a new graphics engine.**

Robotech Resurrected

The cult favorite animated series is making a comeback. Has time rendered it obsolete?

Blasting onto the airwaves back in 1985, *Robotech* revolutionized the world of after-school cartoons by bringing Japanese anime into the mainstream. An absolute epic as far as animated series were concerned, it spanned three separate series and some 85 episodes (not including the never-aired three episode follow-up, *The Sentinels*). It also pretty much wrote the book on transforming mecha (giant robot) combat, something that has had fans clamoring for a videogame adaptation of the various series for more than a decade.

Enter Mattel Interactive, which recently snapped up the rights to produce games based on all three *Robotech* series *(The Macross Saga, Southern Cross,* and *The New Generation)* for PC and "undisclosed" consoles (which, we've been assured, will almost certainly include PS2). Details concerning what type of game (or games) to expect when they begin arriving late next year weren't available at the time of the announcement, so we got in touch with Mattel Interactive's Charles Harribey, a self-confessed fan of the series and the man who's been charged with making the game(s) a reality, to see what we could find out.

▲ **Released by Harmony Gold, *Robotech* and its giant transforming jet fighters brought anime action into the after-school mainstream back in 1985. Let's hope the games can be just as groundbreaking.**

PSM: Since you're such a big fan of the series, you've obviously had a lot of time to think about what type of game you'd make based on the *Robotech* universe. How do you see the game shaping up?

Charles Harribey: While I cannot give specifics on our concepts, I can tell you that they capture the heart of what makes *Robotech* compelling. I wouldn't do it if I wasn't going to do it right.

PSM: Do you see it being set in the *Macross Saga* series timeframe? It would be great to see elements from *Southern Cross* (hover bikes/tanks), *New Generation* (Alpha fighters and riding armor), and even the Sentinels be incorporated into subsequent games, if not in this one.

CH: The *Macross* segment of *Robotech* certainly seems to be the most popular and with good reason. However, *Robotech* is much more than just *Macross*. The fact that *Macross* is fantastic, and yet s only a portion of the universe, is one of the things that makes *Robotech* so interesting. It would be safe to assume that we will start with *Macross*. Though like the series, *Macross* is really just the first act

PSM: Any chance that the original voice actors from the various TV series will lend their talents to the game(s)?

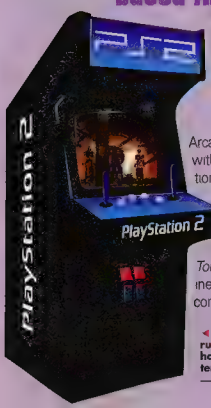
CH: There is a strong possibility that the original characters from the series will appear in the games. If so, then the best thing to do would be to get the original voice actors to reprise their roles.

PSM: There have been attempts in the past to bring *Robotech* to consoles in the U.S. *(Robotech: Crystal Dreams* for Nintendo 64, for instance) but they've never actually seen release. What're your thoughts as to why it's been so hard to make this thing a reality, and how will you set about making it one?

CH: The scale of *Robotech* is beyond epic. Three generations, each with unique characters, vehicles and stories. Battles with not dozens, but hundreds or thousands of participants. In order to pull that off, you need clear game concepts and the resources to develop those concepts. We have both. In addition, until now, the technology really has not been there to deliver the definitive Robotech gaming experience. Console and PC technology has finally gotten to the point, whereas we have the ability to surpass the original material in almost every way.

Sony Announces PlayStation2-based Arcade Hardware

Can Tekken 4 be far behind?



Arcade junkies will no doubt be familiar with the various arcade-based incarnations of the original PlayStation hardware, most prominently the System 11 and 12 boards used by Namco for such games as *Tekken 3* and *Tekken Tag Tournament*. Recently, Sony made the inevitable announcement in Japan concerning an arcade version of the PlayStation2 hardware, simply dubbed PS2A (for "arcade"), and developers are already reported to be receiving development software to begin coding games for the system.

◀ **By the end of 2001, arcade games running on enhanced PlayStation2 hardware should be gobbling up quarters across the country.**

It's unknown at this time which companies have taken possession of development kits, but it's safe to assume that the heavy hitters such as Namco and Capcom were among the first in line. That said, we're hopefully one big step toward long-awaited games such as *Tekken 4* finally seeing the light of day. In fact, rumors are already beginning to surface that Namco is planning *Soul Calibur 2* for the PS2A architecture (and, presumably, PS2).

There's been no indication as to when we can expect to see PS2A games start popping up at local arcades, but it'll hopefully be soon. We'll continue to keep you updated when it comes to new PS2A developments — for now, scope out the tech specs below, and start saving your quarters.

PS2A Tech Specs

Storage: CD-ROM, DVD-ROM
I/O Buffer Memory: 32MB (expandable to 64MB)
System Memory: 256MB
Performance: Same as PS2 console, minus DVD playback
iLINK x 1
USB x 2
Memory Card Slot x 1

NOTES

Here are a few other notes of interest, including the latest up-to-the-minute information on everything PlayStation...

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...op... ...Ca... ...the... ...ub... ...ame series. These staffers will form a whole new division of Capcom devoted to developing games, presumably for all platforms including PlayStation2. We'll have more information as it becomes available.

In addition to *Hardy Gerbil Project Eyes Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2, Timesplitters,* and a new *Tomb Raider* game, Eidos has signed up its support for PlayStation2 with the announcement of three more games for the system. *Fear Effect 2* is the sequel to last year's popular adventure game. *Kear Dream Fighter Hello* is a prequel to the cult PSone fighter. Also in the works is *Blood Omen 2*, the sequel to the original *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain*. More surprising is news that *Commando 2*, the company's detailed military action game, is also destined for the system. Both games are due to hit during

Square's latest *Final Fantasy* game has seen phenomenal success in Japan. More than 1.2 million copies of the game had been pre-ordered prior to FFIX's July 7 release in Japan, and a whopping 2.6 million copies were sold in total on the first day.

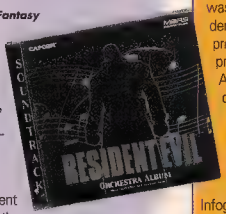
Best known for its high-end home theater products, Monster Cable will be introducing a new line of cables and accessories for use with the PlayStation2 alongside the system this October. Among the custom products to expect are S-Video, component video, and digital optical cords designed with extra high-quality 24kt gold connectors for what should hopefully be the best picture and sound quality possible from the system.

Game Soundtracks Go Mainstream

Square and Capcom tunes coming soon to a store near you

In Japan, where videogaming is as much a part of everyday life as movies, music, and television, game soundtracks have been as commonplace as their film industry counterparts for decades now. On this side of the Pacific, however, they've been rarities, often (if ever) relegated to the import bins at larger record shops. If companies such as Mars Colony Music and TokyoPOP/Mixx Entertainment have their way, that won't be the case much longer.

Mars Colony Music recently released *Resident Evil: Orchestra Album*, a $16.99 disc featuring select tracks from all three PlayStation *RE* games performed by the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, which should be available at your local record shop (or via the Internet) as you read this. Through an exclusive agreement with Square, TokyoPOP/Mixx Entertainment will release the *Parasite Eve 2* Original Soundtrack in September, followed by *FFIX: Music From The Final Fantasy IX Video Game* in November (presumably to coincide with the speculated release date for the game). Pricing information and exact dates for these discs had yet to be finalized as of press time.



◄ ► ***Final Fantasy IX*** **and** ***Resident Evil*** **are just two of the big-name properties to see their soundtracks released in the US this year.**

The sales of these soundtracks, particularly *FFIX*, could very well have a big impact on the release of future videogame music discs into the mainstream marketplace stateside. Needless to say, we'll be watching how they do very closely and will bring you word of further releases as they're announced.

PS2's Expanding Horizons

During its first annual PlayStation2 Middleware Expo, held on June 21-23 in Japan, Sony Computer Entertainment demonstrated support for several USB-based expansion devices utilizing drivers developed by its middleware partners.

The most intriguing of these was a prototype 56k analog modem with associated web-browsing and email software. Sony has still not announced whether it will market the modem and Internet connection software itself, or if we can expect third-party peripheral companies to deliver the goods. Nor was a timetable announced for the peripheral's introduction. Also demonstrated were drivers to enable the connection of USB-based inkjet printers to PS2, one of the many applications of which being the ability to print out email and other documents downloaded over the Internet. As with the modem, there was no mention of when we might see these drivers put to use.

PSM has learned from industry sources that at least one unnamed peripheral manufacturer is planning to have a third-party USB-based modem and necessary Internet software ready to go for PS2's launch in October. Combined with the fact that some games (such as Infogrames' *Unreal Tournament*) may support modem play, this points toward the possibility that we could be playing PS2 games online sooner than originally thought. In any event, we'll continue to keep you updated with the latest on this front.

While the modem was hidden from view, you could still surf the Web (in this case, Yahoo!) via PS2 at the middleware expo.

Sneak Preview: Legend of Dragoon Toys

The cast of Sony's new RPG gets an outfit

The number of videogame spin-off toys continues to grow at a breakneck pace here in the States. Sony's recently released epic RPG, *Legend of Dragoon*, serves as the basis for the latest action figures from Blue Box Toys, the company responsible for this summer's *Omega Boost* and *Fighting Force* lines.

BBI provided us with an advance look at the figures, which are slated to hit store shelves this fall, and they're easily some of the best-looking "mainstream" videogame toys we've seen in a while. With each figure expected to ring in at around the same price as the *Omega Boost* and *Fighting Force* toys (read: about $10 each) the line will include six characters: Dart, Shana, Ravits, Rose, Kongol, and Lloyd.

As for how accurately you'll be able to pose the plasticized *Legend of Dragoon* cast, BBI's newly-coined "Smart Move Articulation" seems to mean that most of their major joints will be movable, sans the elbows on one of two figures. Regardless, that's still a lot better than most figures (or should we say statues?) released nowadays.

Fans of the game will definitely want to keep an eye out for these highly detailed figures. We'll continue to being you the latest on other upcoming videogame toys lines as they're announced.

Clockwise from left: Shana, Kongol, Ravits, Dart, Rose, and Lloyd — the *Legend of Dragoon* crew, now in plastic form.

Nobody gets Bouncer before we do.
Nobody gets
Final Fantasy IX before we do.
Nobody gets
Tekken Tag Tournament before we do.
Nobody gets
Dark Cloud before we do.
Nobody gets
Gran Turismo 2000 before we do.
Reserve your copy now at any of our over 950 stores nationwide.
Or do it in minutes online at www.gamestop.com.
Either way, nobody gets to play before you do.
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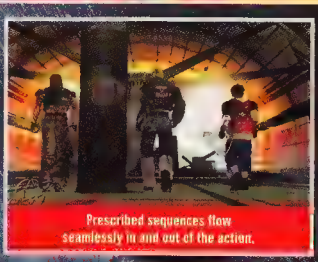
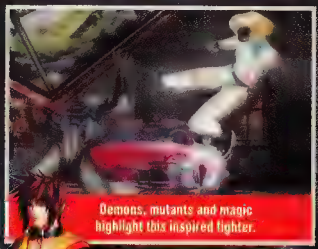
Babbage's
software etc

Kickin' Booty Never Looked This Good

"One of the first PS2 games ever revealed to the public, **The Bouncer** is a gorgeous beat-'em-up title that was responsible for creating huge expectations around Sony's new system. Get ready for a cinematic action experience like no other. Battle through the mean streets of the future within amazingly realistic, interactive environments like you have never experienced before. An incredible storyline and visuals await those who cross into the Dog Street." — **DailyRadar.com**


Prescribed sequences flow seamlessly in and out of the action.


Demons, mutants and magic highlight this inspired fighter.

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See the Combat Cables from Mad Catz to link two PlayStations for head-to-head competition.

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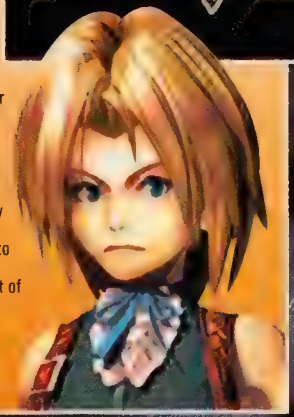
More Mystery, Magic, And Sleepless Nights

FINAL FANTASY IX

ファイナルファンタジーIX

"**Final Fantasy IX** is the final game in the series to appear on the PlayStation console. It is a return to the days of medieval knights black images. Some people have complained about the futuristic themes of Final Fantasy VII & VIII, but with **Final Fantasy IX**, they'll have nothing to complain about anymore. Join Zidane, VIVI, and the rest of the crew on this grand adventure!"

— **DailyRadar.com**



Machine: PSX **Publisher:** Squaresoft
Genre: RPG **# of Players:** 1
Release date: November, 2000

Return to a world filled with mystery and magic for the biggest adventure yet.

The ninth installment of this best-selling RPG series has a completely new look and feel.

An amazing visual, audio, and gameplay experience for any brave enough to enter.

Save game positions and customize controller settings with the PlayStation memory card.

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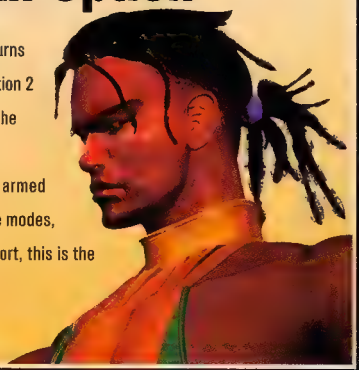
TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT™

Calling For Your Mommy Is Not An Option

Machine: PS2 Publisher: Namco
Genre: Fighting # of Players: 1-4
Release date: September, 2000

"The #1 fighting game series of all time returns with a vengeance on the power-laden PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Featuring the all-new TAG Battle System for the ultimate onslaught of moves and combos. 34 fighters armed with new surprises up their sleeves. 7 grade modes, plus hidden modes as well. In short, this is the must-have title of the year."

— DailyRadar.com



Choose from 34 characters throughout the Tekken series.

A special tag-team mode creates new combinations of attacking never before possible.

State-of-the art design and technology add incredible realism.

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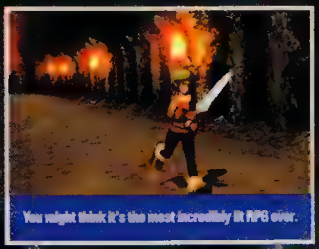
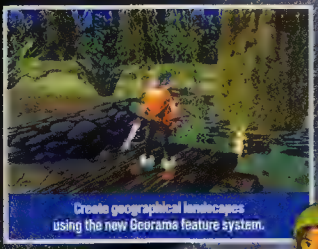
The Magic Carpet Ride Of A Lifetime

"Get ready! This incredible new release for the PlayStation 2 will amaze you. **Dark Cloud's** true-to-life graphics, easy gameplay and smooth animations are unmatched. This fresh game promises to deliver what you crave – strategy, battles and puzzles. In addition, you can create geographical landscapes using the new Georama feature system. **Dark Cloud** is definitely a game you'll want to explore!" – **DailyRadar.com**

DARK CLOUD



You might think it's the most incredibly lit RPG ever.



Create geographical landscapes using the new Georama feature system.

A wide variety of creative characters will round out the party.

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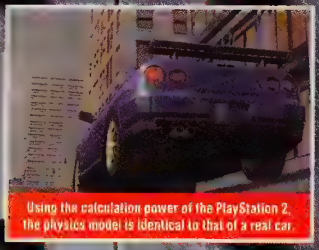
GT 2000 GRAN TURISMO

CAUTION: Objects Are Moving Faster Than They Appear

Machine: PS2 **Publisher:** Sony
Genre: Racing **# of Players:** 2
Release date: Fall, 2000

"Jump behind the wheel of over 500 amazing cars and get ready for the ride of your life. **Gran Turismo 2000** truly is a visual masterpiece enhanced by the power of the new PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. And talk about feeling the need for speed! With the Dual Shock 2 analog controller, you feel the power of the game just like you would the acceleration of a real car."

— **DailyRadar.com**



Using the calculation power of the PlayStation 2, the physics model is identical to that of a real car.

Feel the speed as you maneuver through curves and shoot down straight-aways.

Environment mapping creates broadcast-quality graphics that blur the line between game and reality.

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GOSSIP

You want more than just the latest headlines—you want the dirt, the inside scoop on what's *really* going on with the PlayStation. Look no further, because PSM always has its ear to the wall...

Ape Escape For PS2?

This could be the news fans of Sony's masterful monkey-hunting platformer have been waiting for. While not official, rumors have begun to trickle out of Japan that work is already underway on a sequel to *Ape Escape*, and that it's destined for PlayStation2.

Sony's world-wide branches are keeping tight-lipped concerning the possibility that the game does indeed exist, but representatives have teased at its likelihood just a little by offering coy "it's not out of the question" responses. Whether development of the game would be handled by the original team is in question, as the original's executive producer, Shuhei Yoshida, was recently named the head of internal development at Sony Computer Entertainment America.

One factor working in favor of the sequel is the fact that PS2 comes with a Dual Shock controller, which will help it reach a wider audience than the first.

***Ape Escape* earned second place in our All-Time Top 25 Games feature in issue #34, so its sequel will have a lot to live up to.**

PS2 Backwards Compatibility Boost?

[redacted] of the hardware features PlayStation2 has to offer, word from the development community seems to suggest that the best is yet to come—at least when PS2's backwards compatibility with original PlayStation games is concerned.

According to specifications provided to developers, it appears as if PS2 will be able to run low-res PS1 games in full 640x480 high-resolution mode, perhaps with a future upgrade to the PlayStation driver [redacted]

PS1 games already look a little better on PS2, but if Sony actually takes advantage of the system's ability to boost their resolution, they'll look out of this world.

Exactly what [redacted] would work is available only to licensed developers, so there's little chance of learning more about it until Sony is ready to make an official announcement.

There's also the issue of compatibility. As it stands, some PS1 games just won't work if faster drive access is enabled in PS2's PlayStation driver. There's a chance that boosting the resolution of PlayStation games might introduce more compatibility problems, and Sony would be trying to iron this out before introducing the feature. As for how you'd go about upgrading your PlayStation driver, we've heard that as part of their license to develop on PS2, companies are required to place updated drivers on all of their games as they're made available by Sony, and that these will be copied over your old versions without you needing to do a thing.

So, we might not be seeing this newly discovered "feature" anytime soon, but it's definitely there, and could make a world of difference when it comes to playing your old PS1 titles.

A Marvel-ous Rumor

Capcom fighting game fans will want to sit up and take notice at this rumor. Reports out of Japan suggest that the company is planning to bring *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* to PlayStation2, and that it'll be a lot more than a simple port of its arcade and Dreamcast counterparts.

Specifically, the rumors indicate that we can expect the game's character roster to jump from 56 to somewhere in the 70s. That means there'd be at least 14 new characters, and they'd be entirely new to the series, since all of the Versus game characters are represented in *MVC2*.

Word on the rest of the features to be expected from this potential port have yet to surface, but if this initial info is any indication, there should be a lot to look forward to. We'll keep you posted with the latest, so sit tight.

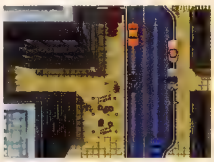
If you like fast-paced fighters, *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* is the reigning champ. If rumors hold true, it'll be on PS2 before the end of the year in Japan.

DMA to Become a Repeat Offender?

Whether you like playing on the other side of the law or not, DMA Design's *Grand Theft Auto* is a bona fide best-seller the world over. Having already spawned one sequel, indications are that the series will soon gain a new installment for PlayStation2.

Details are still sketchy, but rumor has it that the working title for the game is *GTA3D*, thus implying a *Driver*-style fully-realized city setting for the game. And since it's being deployed with PS2 in mind, it's same to assume that the level of realism (traffic levels, pedestrian traffic, physics, and effects) in the game world can (and hopefully will) be closer to life than ever before.

Neither DMA nor US rights holder Rockstar have officially confirmed that the game is in development, but we'll keep you abreast of any new developments as they surface.



▶ *Grand Theft Auto* became a hit for letting gamers explore the other side of the law, and now there's a chance that a fully 3D sequel will grace PS2.

Tekken Tag and Others Enhanced for U.S. Release?

▲ The shimmering effect in *Ridge Racer V* can now be taken care of thanks to anti-aliasing. Let's hope Namco implements it for the US release!

Since last issue, the "dreaded" problem of aliasing (or "jaggies") in PS2 games has thankfully been put to rest by Sony, who has begun providing information to developers on how to implement full anti-aliasing in their upcoming games. But what about those games that're already "finished" — i.e. out in Japan and headed to the US for PS2's launch this fall?

The good news is that, according to development sources, anti-aliasing can be implemented in finished games as easily as it can be for works-in-progress. It's just a simple matter of taking apart the game program, adding in the lines of code to do it, and then recompiling the game. This means that games such as *Tekken Tag Tournament*, *Ridge Racer V*, and others could potentially get a noticeable facelift for US release. As it stands, however, neither Namco nor any other developer has confirmed that their games will take advantage of this "revelation," but we'll keep you posted.

Most games currently in development for the US launch, however, are expected to boast full anti-aliasing now that Sony has delivered the goods on how it make it work.

Q&A

Recently, we had to a chance to sit down and chat with two of the key members of the *Final Fantasy IX* development team, Hironobu Sakaguchi and Shinji Hashimoto. Together, the two provided valuable insight on one of the most anticipated RPGs of this year. Here's what they had to say.

◀ In the beginning of the game, Zidane Tribal runs away with the princess Garnet.

PSM: How long has *FFIX* been in development, and how many people worked on it?
SQ: About a year and a half. We had approximately 300 people working on it, including external resources

PSM: How was the development of *FFIX* different from *FFVII* and *VIII*?
SQ: There wasn't anything in particular that was different from *FFVII* and *VIII*

PSM: *FFIX* is the last *Final Fantasy* on the original PlayStation, and it's also the last game in the series before *"Ten"* — how did this affect the way the team approached making the game?
SQ: It didn't have a significant affect on the development. We just wanted to follow what we've been doing, which was to create one another great story for the series.

PSM: What was the main reason for taking the series back to a pure fantasy style?
SQ: This is the last of the *Final Fantasies* with a single digit and we wanted to go back to the original idea. Both *FFVII* and *FFVIII* take place on cyber worlds/universes, so we wanted to create some kind of medieval universe using the technologies applied in *FFVII* and *FFVIII*.

PSM: How much FMV is in the game, compared to the past sequels on the PlayStation?
SQ: Like *FFVIII*, I believe there is a little under one hour of FMV.

Game Features

PSM: How is the game structure in *FFIX* different from *FFVII* and *VIII*? What new features have been added?
SQ: The biggest departure from *FFVII* and *FFVIII* is that *FFIX* brings back the fantasy setting from earlier *Final Fantasy* games. Although not explicitly stated in the game, each character in *FFIX* has a job class, which is also similar to the earlier games.

PSM: Specifically, could you please talk about changes to the combat system, such as how Guardian

Forces work now? Are the summoned monsters still called Guardian Forces? Will a majority of the GFs in *FFVIII* return in this game?
SQ: The combat system in *FFIX* is a wonderful fusion of the past *FF* combat systems. *FFIX* uses the ATB (Active Time Battle) system, like *VII* and *VIII*. Each character learns abilities and commands appropriate to his or her job class. There are two major ability types: action abilities and support abilities. Action abilities are commands like Black Magic, Steal, White Magic, and Summon. These abilities use MP. Support abilities assist characters in battle with skills like Auto-Regen, Auto-Potion, and Chemist. Both types of abilities are learned by equipping items and acquiring AP in battle. For support abilities, once they are learned, they must be equipped by using Magic Stones, which are also received from battle. Characters can go into Trance after repeated physical attacks from enemies. When the Trance gauge, located below the ATB gauge, reaches maximum capacity, the character will go into Trance. Commands change and attacks become more powerful during Trance. Up to four people can be in the active party. Guardian Forces are called Eidolons in *FFIX*. They are called in battle using the Summon command. Many of the Guardian Forces in *FFVIII* return in *FFIX*, including Shiva, Ifrit, Odin, Leviathan, Bahamut, Carbuncle.

PSM: What other changes are there in the combat system?
SQ: In *FFIX*, you can position your characters in the front or back row in battle (like in *FFVII*). Generally, your battle position affects the amount of damage you deal and take. If you use magic or long-range weapons, you can deal just as much damage from the back row as you can from the front row. Many weapons in *FFIX* have Add ST (Add Status), which can cause abnormal status effects on the target. For example, if you attack with a Mage Masher, which has Add ST Silence, then in addition to losing HP, the enemy is Silenced and will not be able to use magic.

> **"This is the last of the Final Fantasies with a single digit and we wanted to go back to the original idea."**

PSM: Have you incorporated user feedback from the last two games?
SQ: Yes, to some extent.

PSM: What is the main theme to the story in *FFIX*?
SQ: What is the meaning of life?

PSM: What sort of vehicles can we expect to see in the game?
SQ: There are actually several different vehicles.

Airship: Airships allow you to fly anywhere in the world.

Ship: When airships are not available, you can travel across the ocean on an ordinary ship.

Chocobo: A chocobo named Choco allows you to travel the world without encountering enemies. At first, Choco can only travel over land, but if you raise him properly, he can carry you over water and through the air as well.

Gargant: Gargants are giant bugs that you can ride to travel quickly through underground caverns.

PSM: What role will Chocobo play in *FFIX*?
SQ: Chocobos are a form of transportation, just like in any other *FF* game. You can also raise and evolve a chocobo by playing a mini-game called "Chocobo Hot & Cold". This mini-game leads to a major side-quest involving a chocobo, so don't miss it!

PSM: Can you explain a little bit about the Active Time Event? What is it and how does it affect the game?
SQ: Active Time Event (ATE) is a system that lets you see events that are happening elsewhere. For example, while you are controlling the main character in a town, you can view what the other characters are doing in another part of the same town. You can follow the story and finish the game without viewing ATEs. They simply provide addition-

al information and behind-the-scenes details about the story and the characters. You can only view ATEs when the ATE option appears on the screen.

PSM: After playing the Japanese version of the game for a bit, we have noticed that it is a lot funnier than the past games. Does this continue though the whole game or does it eventually turn serious?

SQ: *Final Fantasy* fans will notice that there is a lot of humor both in the beginning and throughout the game. This does not mean, however, that the entire game is completely light-hearted. All the main characters must go through some pretty serious ordeals before the story is over, so this game would not be classified as a comedy. It has plenty of heroism, suspense, and tragedy.

> "While you are controlling the main character in a town, you can view what the other characters are doing in another part of the same town."

PSM: This game seems different from the rest of the series in that there doesn't appear to be one main character, like Cloud or Squall. Could you talk a little about this unique "ensemble" approach?

SQ: This approach has been seen in *FFVI*, where there was not a single 'main' character. For *FFVII* and *VIII*, the story was actually created after the main characters (Cloud, Squall) were created by Tetsuya Nomura. On the other hand, the story became the base for *FFIX*, with other elements (including characters) falling into place as the story developed.

PSM: Will the game have any PocketStation features?

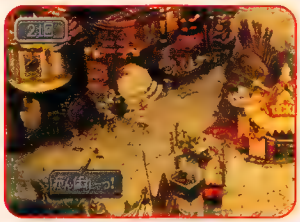
SQ: Unfortunately, it will not.

PSM: We've heard that the Triple Triad Card Game from *FFVIII* will return — are the rules, or its purpose in the game, any different from before?

SQ: There is a card game in *FFIX*, but it is not Triple Triad so the rules and purpose are different

PSM: Will *FFIX* feature a lot of minigames? Can you give us a few examples?

SQ: There are a ton of mini-games in this installment of the *FF* series. Most are not very difficult and are not completely necessary to finish the game. For example, one of the younger characters comes across some girls playing jump rope. He can try to break their record and do some pretty interesting jumps to get a prize. In another part of the game, the main character is an actor performing a duel before an audience. Your partner calls the moves, and you must respond quickly and pull it off well. If the finicky nobles like your performance, you can get some extra money thrown onto the stage. Either way, you have the option to come back for an encore. Occasionally, a mini-game is necessary to advance the story. For example, at one point, a character must retrieve a key



hung on a cage that houses a terrifying beast. He must creep up when the monster turns away and come to a stop when it turns back (kind of like the game "Red Light, Green Light"), or else the monster will scare the timid character away.

PSM: How long do you think it will take an average gamer to complete *FFIX*?

SQ: Based on the amount of text in the game, an average gamer will take about 40–50 hours of play to reach the end. Obviously, an experienced *FF* player focused on beating the game will get through much faster than someone who prefers to take their time and enjoy all the different mini-games and side-quests *FFIX* has to offer

PSM: Can you tell us a little about the PlayStation2 versions of *Final Fantasy*?

SQ: We have yet to make any announcements on *FFX* or *FFXI*. Information will be made available in a timely manner on <http://www.play-online.com>www.playonline.com.

General

PSM: We've heard that Square has made the decision to not release any strategy guides for *FFIX* in Japan. Will this be Square's policy from now on, and if so, won't this be counter-acted by the online strategy guides starting with *FFX*?

SQ: Not a policy - that is something that has yet to be determined.

PSM: When can we expect to see *FFIX* over here in the U.S.?

SQ: Before the Christmas holidays.

PSM: In closing, what final message would you like to say to our readers about *Final Fantasy IX*?

SQ: We are confident that this game will attract many many gamers — not only RPG fans — around the world. Be on the lookout — this will be the best game you'll play this holiday season!

CHECKPOINT!

The PSM Release Schedule

We've listed every upcoming PlayStation game we can think of. However, keep in mind that these dates often change. It's still fun to look forward, though!

PlayStation Charts

Your monthly look at the best-selling PlayStation games

The EB Chart

(For June)

◀ This epic RPG is quickly proving to be the sales blockbuster Sony hoped it

Here are the top selling PlayStation games at Electronics Boutique stores nation-wide. Sony's epic RPG, *The Legend of Dragoon*, led the pack this month.

1 ▶ **Legend Of Dragoon**
2 ▶ **Legend Of Mana** - *Secret of Mana* sequel
3 ▶ **Vagrant Story** - Down from #1 last month
4 ▶ **Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn** - Action-packed
5 ▶ **Street Fighter EX 2** - Capcom fights back
6 ▶ **Triple Play 2001** - Still the baseball champ
7 ▶ **NBA Live 2000** - Playoff fever spurring sales?
8 ▶ **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater** - Still going strong
9 ▶ **Syphon Filter 2** - Sony's action favorite
10 ▶ **WWF Smackdown** - Down, but not out

PC Data Chart

(For June)

◀ *Legend of Dragoon*'s first-month sales are proof that the RPG genre is a favorite among gamers.

PC Data surveys the biggest retailers each month to find out which PlayStation games are selling the best. This month, it was Sony's *Legend of Dragoon*.

1 ▶ **WWF Smackdown**
2 ▶ **Spec Ops** - $9.99 - Are you out of your mind?
3 ▶ **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater** - Be like Tony!
4 ▶ **Legend of Mana** - Sequel makes good
5 ▶ **Vagrant Story** - Down from last month
6 ▶ **Syphon Filter 2** - Gabe's still on assignment
7 ▶ **Grind Session** - Sony's first skater
8 ▶ **WWF Smackdown** - Sony's top wrestling game-ah
9 ▶ **Jedi Power Battles** - Beware the dark side
10 ▶ **Triple Play 2001** - Still in the game

COLOR KEY

Green: Release has changed since last month.
Red: A brand-new addition to the list this month.

PlayStation Games

3RD-QUARTER GAMES

AUGUST

Acclaim	Racing	ATV: Quad Racers
Acclaim	Wrestling	ECW: Anarchy Rulez
Acclaim	Racing	Re-Volt 2: RC Revenge
Acclaim	Racing	Vanishing Point
Activision	Action	Spiderman
Activision	Action	Star Trek: Invasion
Activision	Action/Adventure	Tenchu 2: Assassins
Codemasters	Racing	World Racing Championship
Crave	Racing	Sno-Cross Championship Racing
Eidos	Sports	Sydney 2000 Olympics
Fox Interactive	Action	Alien Resurrection
GT Interactive	Action	Animorphs
Infogrames	Racing	Wacky Races
Konami	Soccer	Major League Soccer
Midway	Racing	Rollcage Stage II
Midway	Strategy	Team Buddies
Rockstar	Adventure	Darkstone
Sony	Platform	Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge
Sony	Sports	NCAA GameBreaker 2001
Sony	Sports	NFL GameDay 2001
Square EA	RPG	Chrono Cross
Take Two	Racing	Ford Racing
THQ	Action/Adventure	Danger Girl
Working Designs	Action	Rayerisis

SEPTEMBER

Activision	Skateboarding	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Capcom	RPG	Breath of Fire 4
Capcom	Action/Platform	Mega Man Legends 2
Codemasters	Boxing	Mike Tyson Boxing
EA Sports	Sports	Madden NFL 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NCAA Football 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NCAA March Madness 2001
Hasbro	Action	Action Man
Hasbro	Arcade	Breakout
Hasbro	Gameshow	Family Feud
Hasbro	Arcade	Frogger 2
Hasbro	Arcade	Galaga
Hasbro	Gameshow	Jeopardy
Hasbro	Racing	NASCAR Racers
Hasbro	Gameshow	Wheel of Fortune
Midway	Car Combat	Destruction Derby Raw
Midway	Action/Adventure	In Cold Blood
Midway	Sports	NFL Blitz 2001
Namco	Action	Dragon Valor
Namco	Action	Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness
Sony	Sports	NHL Face Off 2001
Square EA	Action/RPG	Parasite Eve 2
Ubi Soft	Racing	F1 Championship '99
Ubi Soft	Action	Inspector Gadget
Ubi Soft	Platform	Rayman 2

OTHER 3RD-QUARTER RELEASES

Electronic Arts	Sports	RollerJam
Fox Interactive	Wrestling	Simpsons Wrestling
Natsume	RPG	Harvest Moon: Back to Nature
THQ	Sports	MTV Sports Skateboarding

4TH-QUARTER GAMES

OCTOBER

Acclaim	Boxing	HBO Boxing
Activision	Action	Buzz Lightyear of Star Command
Capcom	Action/Adventure	Dino Crisis 2
Hasbro	Racing	NASCAR Heat
LucasArts	Action	Star Wars: Demolition
Midway	Racing	Muppet Race Mania
THQ	Sports	TJ Lavin's Ultimate BMX
Ubi Soft	Racing	Batman Overdrive
Ubi Soft	Action	Donald Duck Quack Attack
Ubi Soft	Dancing	Jungle Book Rhythm 'N Groove

NOVEMBER

Acclaim	BMX Racing	Dave Mirra's Freestyle BMX
Activision	Adventure	The Lion King
Activision	BMX Racing	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX
Activision	Action	X-Men: Mutant Wars
Atlus	RPG	Persona 2
Enix	Dancing	Bust-a-Groove 2
Hasbro	Racing	Nicktoons Racing
Konami	Platform	The Grinch
Midway	Action/Platform	Duce
Midway	Action	Muppet Monster Adventure
Midway	Boxing	Ready 2 Rumble Round 2
Sony	Sports	Cool Boarders 2001
Sony	Party	Crash Bash
Sony	Platform	The Emperor's New Clothes
Sony	Sports	NBA ShootOut 2001
Sony	Sports	NCAA Final Four 2001
Sony	Platform	Spyro: Year of the Dragon
Southpeak	Action	Dukes of Hazzard 2
Take Two	Action	Hidden & Dangerous
Ubi Soft	Action	The Road to El Dorado
Ubi Soft	Action	V.I.P.
Working Designs	RPG	Arc the Lad Collection

OTHER 4TH-QUARTER RELEASES

3DO	Action	Army Men: Air Attack 2
3DO	Action	Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2
Capcom	Action/Adventure	Resident Evil: Survivor
Codemasters	Racing	Colin McRae Rally 2.0
Crave	Platform	Mort the Chicken
Crave	Fighting	Ultimate Fighting Championship
EA Games	Action	007 Racing
EA Games	Action	Medal of Honor Underground
EA Games	Action	The World is Not Enough
EA Sports	Racing	NASCAR 2001
Eidos	Action	Fear Effect: Retro Helix
Enix	RPG	Terraka: The Last Hope
Enix	RPG	Valkyrie Profile
Fox Interactive	Action/Adventure	Planet of the Apes
Fox Interactive	Action/Adventure	Titan A.E.
Infogrames	Action/Adventure	Alone/Dark: Nightmare
Infogrames	Action	Driver 2
Infogrames	Sports	Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball
Infogrames	Action	Looney Tunes: Time Busters
Infogrames	Action	Looney Tunes Racing
Infogrames	Action	Looney Tunes: Sheep Dog/Wolf
Infogrames	Racing	Ngen Racing
Konami	Sports	ESPN Fishing
Mattel	Fighting	Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots
THQ	Action/Adventure	Evil Dead: Hail to the King
THQ	Sports	MTV Sports Pure Ride
THQ	Action	Power Rangers: Rescue
THQ	Adventure	Scooby-Doo
THQ	Wrestling	Smackdown 2: Know Your Role
Titus	Action	Incredible Crisis
Working Designs	RPG	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete

PlayStation2 Games

4TH-QUARTER GAMES

LAUNCH GAMES

Agetec	Action	Armored Core 2
Agetec	RPG	Eternal Ring
Agetec	Adventure	Evergrace
Capcom	Fighting	Street Fighter EX3
Crave	Racing	Fusion GT
EA Games	Strategy	Kessen
EA Games	Strategy	Theme Park World
EA Games	Action	X Squad
EA Sports	Sports	FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer
EA Sports	Sports	Madden NFL 2001
EA Sports	Racing	SSX
Eidos	Action	Time Splitters
Knet	Action	Dynasty Warriors 2
Konami	Action	Gradius III&IV
Konami	Sports	International Track & Field
Konami	Action	Silent Scope
Midway	Action	Gauntlet: Dark Legacy
Namco	Fighting	Tekken Tag Tournament
Namco	Racing	Ridge Racer V
Rockstar	Racing	Midnight Club
Rockstar	Action	Smuggler's Run
Sony	Sports	NFL GameBreaker 2001
Sony	Sports	NFL GameDay 2001
Sony	Sports	NHL Face Off 2001
Ubi Soft	Adventure	Disney's Dinosaur
Ubi Soft	Action	Donald Duck Quack Attack
Ubi Soft	Racing	F1 Racing Championship
Ubi Soft	Platform	Rayman 2 The Great Escape
Ubi Soft	Action	The Jungle Book

OTHER 4TH-QUARTER RELEASES

3DO	Action	Army Men Air Attack 2
3DO	Action	Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2
3DO	Adventure	Warrior of Might and Magic
3DO	Action	WDL Thunder Tanks
Bethesda	Strategy	Dreamland Chronicles
EA Games	Action	The World Is Not Enough
EA Games	Wrestling	WCW 2001
EA Sports	Sports	Knockout Kings 2001
EA Sports	Racing	NASCAR 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NBA Live 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NHL 2001
EA Sports	Sports	Swing Away Golf
EA Sports	Sports	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001
Eidos	Adventure	Legacy of Kain Soul Reaver 2
Konami	Strategy	Age of Empires II
Konami	Sports	ESPN X Games Snowboarding
Konami	Sports	NBA 2 Night
Konami	Adventure	Shadow of Destiny
LucasArts	Racing	Super Bombad Racing
Metro3D	Action	Armada 2
Rockstar	Action	Oni
Sony	Adventure	Dark Cloud
Sony	Puzzle	FantaVision
Sony	Racing	Gran Turismo 2000
Square EA	Action	The Bouncer
THQ	Action	Red Faction
THQ	RPG	Summoner

1ST-HALF 2001 GAMES

Acclaim	Sports	All Star Baseball 2001
Acclaim	Racing	Ferrari 360 Challenge
Activision	Adventure	Gunslinger
Activision	Adventure	Orphen
Activision	Racing	Street Lethal
Infogrames	Action	Motor Mayhem
Infogrames	Adventure	Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee
Interplay	Action	Run Like Hell
Konami	Adventure	Zone of the Enders
Midway	Action	Gauntlet: Dark Legacy
Sony	Racing	Wipeout Fusion
Square EA	Racing	Driving Emotion Type-S

2ND-HALF 2001 GAMES

Konami	Action/Adventure	Metal Gear Solid 2
Midway	Strategy	Legion, Legend of Excalibur

TO BE ANNOUNCED

Konami	Action	7 Blades
Blue Byte	Action	Dragon's Lair 3D
Capcom	Adventure	Onimusha Warlords
EA Games	Strategy	Pirates of Skull Cove
EA Sports	Racing	F1 2001
Eidos	Action	Eden
Eidos	Action	Herdy Gerdy
Eidos	Adventure	Tomb Raider
Empire Interactive	Racing	World Sports Cars
Konami	RPG	Ephemeral Fantasia
LucasArts	Action	Star Wars: Starfighter
Midway	Action	Spy Hunter
Namco	Racing	Moto GP
SCI	Action	Titanium Angels
Sony	Action	Extermination
Sony	Adventure	Drakan 2
Sony	Strategy	Dropship
Sony	Racing	Formula One 2000
Sony	Adventure	ICO
Sony	Racing	Spin Sprint Car Racing
Sony	Action	The Getaway
THQ	Wrestling	WWF Wrestling Title
Titus	Racing	Formula X
Titus	Action	Robocop
Titus	Action	Top Gun

PSM'S MUST WANTED

1 ▶ Final Fantasy IX

We finally got a chance to play the Japanese version right before this issue went to press and were instantly sucked in by the new look and feel.

2 ▶

So far, we've only had a small taste of Capcom's prehistoric sequel, but we like what we've played. There's an almost exhausting amount of non-stop action and the whole thing is super-detailed, especially the dinosaurs.

3 ▶ Dark Cloud

No matter how hard we try to tell ourselves that this game won't be out for a long time, it doesn't make us want it any less. It was bordering on mind-blowing at E3, and it's only going to get more impressive from there. Aw,

4 ▶

This is one game that kinda got lost at E3 amid all the PS2 games, but now we've gotten an early copy in the office—and it's not to be overlooked. Stay tuned, Spyro fans, this could be the little guy's best adventure yet!

5 ▶ SSX

Not even the fact that it's been delayed until September in Japan can extinguish our excitement for this far-out snowboarding game. It means we'll have to put up with Randy's incessant "where is it?" exclamations for a few more weeks.

6 ▶ NFL GameDay 2001

We still haven't gotten a peek at GameDay 2001, so EA's first PS2 football offering still commands our undivided anticipation. Every time we

7 ▶ Medal of Honor

The original Medal of Honor is still one of our favorite games, and from what we've seen the sequel will exceed it in every category. New weapons, smarter enemies, and better graphics? Where do we enlist?

8 ▶

The cool factor of the first Driver still hasn't worn off for these wanna-be wheelmen. In fact, Chris can regularly be seen weaving in-between cars in the parking lot, and Steve's taken to yelling "go, go, go!" and running every time he gets done at the ATM.

9 ▶ Tomorrow Never Dies

OK, so Tomorrow Never Dies wasn't James Bond's greatest videogame mission, but this one looks to make up for all that.

10 ▶ Bomberman

Now this is just cool: A multi event party game starring one of our favorite characters and his pals (and enemies, too). It's got the unmistakable look of the platformer series, but the actual events are all very different. It should be a hoot for four players!

CHALLENGE FATE
20 YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE EVENTS OF CHRONO TRIGGER™. NOW A NEW SET OF ADVENTURERS PREPARE FOR A BATTLE THAT WILL SURPASS EVEN SPACE AND TIME

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Violence
Mild Language

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PlayStation

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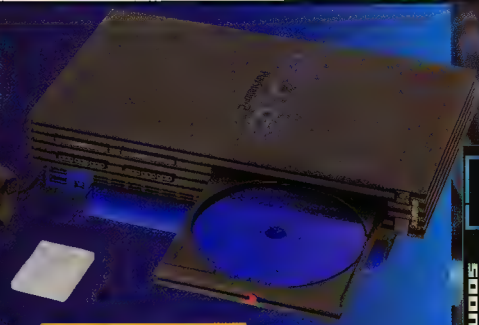
ACTIVISION

Countdown to the PS2



Welcome to our most exciting section, where every month we break all the latest news on Sony's next system. This is THE premier source for PS2 info!

Silent Scope

You're the ultimate sniper in Konami's unique arcade shooter

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Available: October
Type: Action
# of Players: 1
# of Discs: 1

In one of the game's stages, you'll need to infiltrate an enemy compound at night using a night-vision scope. Enemies will actually launch flares in order to blind you.

Currently the reigning king of U.S. arcade games, *Silent Scope* has been confirmed as a PlayStation2 launch title — and it looks to deliver a lot more bang for the buck, if you'll pardon the pun. In addition to enhanced graphics (which, in fact, are fully anti-aliased — no more of the jagged edges associated with the Japanese launch games), you can expect a brand new outdoor shooting range and lots of yet-undiscovered hidden secrets.

While the home version won't come sporting the coin-op's elaborate sniper rifle peripheral (complete with an inset LCD "scope"), it will use a unique targeting system that aims to be the next best thing. You'll aim by holding down the L1 button, which lets you move a small transparent sight around the screen to target a general area near your target. Once you're close, you'll let up on the button, and a magnified scope will appear, which can be adjusted for zoom and transparency.

Beyond the bonuses and adjusted control scheme, the game promises to be shot-for-shot identical to its arcade counterpart. As the plot has it, the presidential family has been kidnapped by the usual sinister organization and it's your job to be their one-man rescue team. The very fast-paced adventure sees you sniping from rooftops, helicopters, and even moving cars, which is sure to put your sharp shooting skills (and nerves) to the test. There are even stages that unfold in the darkness (complete with night-vision scope) and above a crowded football stadium (yikes!). Better yet, your path through each stage will vary each time you play, and there'll be several branching paths to select from during the overall mission — something that's sure to boost the game's replay value.

It's looking mighty promising from what we've played, and you can expect a full review of the game in our November issue.

— Randy Nelson

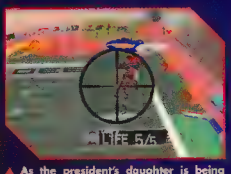
▲ This stage sees you picking out the terrorists from the tourists through the windows of this rustic high-rise hotel.

▲ Aiming during the freeway stage is especially tough, since the car you're in keeps swerving.

▲ This boss tries to run you down in an 18-wheeler... and his only weak point is his head.

▲ The first stage of the game sees you aiding the police from afar as terrorists run rampant in the streets.

▲ The new outdoor shooting range has a decidedly Waco-esque theme. You'll want to spend some time here getting accurate.



▲ As the president's daughter is being carried across the football field, players will actually make an attempt to tackle the terrorist.

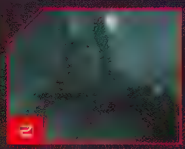
▲ You'll battle the first level boss from inside a helicopter as you both zoom between the skyscrapers. Talk about hair-raising.

MGS2 DVD Trailer

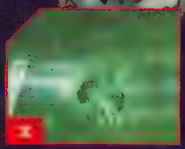
Publisher: Konami
Developer: KCEJ West
Available: Fall 2001
Type: Action/Adventure
# of Players: 1 (possibly 2)
# of Discs: Not determined

Finally, the *Metal Gear Solid 2* trailer that debuted at E3 is available, and on DVD, no less! Unfortunately, it's only being sold in Japan, on Konami's website. Import shops may have a hard time getting copies in stock, so we thought it would be a good idea to run a scene-by-scene walk-through of the trailer here for those that can't see the full thing in motion. We grabbed over 80 screens from the DVD, all of which are of good DVD quality. This is pretty much it for our *MGS2* coverage until Konami unveils more of the game, so enjoy!

▲ After a green screen with the words "The following preview has been approved for all audiences", the trailer begins with a screen full of stormy weather.



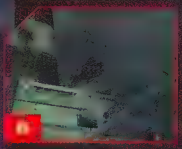
▲ Out of the fog and rain we see a massive ship at sea, rocking back and forth on the choppy, stormy waves. Slowly the camera zooms in, and then we see...



▲ ...a familiar figure appear on deck. We don't know for sure, but it seems as if Snake either teleports on board, or uses a cloaked suit like the Ninja wore in *MGS*.

▲ As Snake slowly stands up, we get a great up-close look at his new PS2 character model, which is much more detailed and smooth than in the last game.

▲ As the camera shifts to show a close-up of Snake's front, a dramatic wave crashes on the deck behind him, the music rising. What a dramatic, heroic moment!

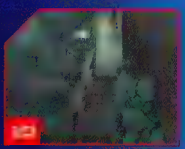


▲ As Snake talks to Otacon via his Codec, the scene shifts to show a helicopter swooping in over the ship. It drops a rope, and soldiers climb down.

▲ Right away, it's easy to see that these new enemy soldiers are much smarter and efficient than before. They easily kill the crew and take over the ship.

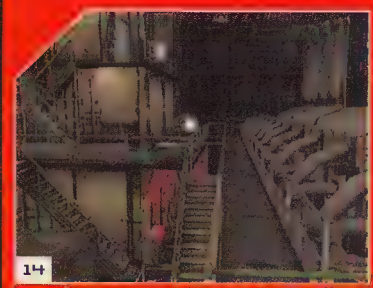
▲ The music picks up the pace, and the familiar *Metal Gear* theme comes in. Yeah! The new musical score absolutely rocks. Snake begins to sneak around.

▲ As Snake makes his way across the deck of the ship, we see some classic *MGS* action. Sneaking past lights, back to the wall — this is what it's all about.



▲ Snake stops to show off a new ability. With his back against a wall, he can now turn his head to better look around a corner. In doing so, he's almost spotted.

Snake Infiltrates the Inside of the Ship



▲ After climbing the stairs to the upper deck, Snake gains entrance to the inside of the ship. As the camera pans across its interior, you get a sense of the incredible detail that the environments in *MGS2* will have. The graphics are very sharp, and there are some aliasing problems, but it's not nearly as noticeable as in other games.

▲ Having barely avoided detection, Snake gives looks of shock and then relief on his face — amazing! He'll actually react to what you do in the game.

▲ Snake waits for the guard to eventually walk away, and then makes his move for the stairs. As he runs up, his feet appear very realistically.

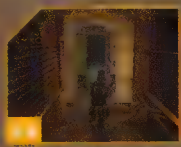
▲ As Snake reaches the top of the staircase, you can see the guard moving away down the catwalk, trying to see through the thick storm with his flashlight.

▲ Just before Snake opens this door and peaks out, you can see a hand-print scanner on the wall behind him — is this just decoration, or could it come into play?

▲ Immediately spotting a guard across the room, Snake pulls out his dart gun and zooms in to get a headshot. The scope display looks much like the last game.

▲ Snake shows that he can now fire from a first-person perspective. He can't run around like this (this game isn't a first-person shooter), but it's great for aiming.

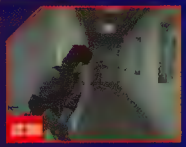
Taking on the Enemy Guards



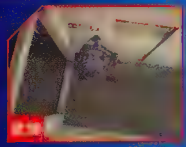
▲ The camera switches to Snake's first person "aiming" perspective, and we get an up-close look at the shivering guard, who appears to be terrified.

▲ Snake decides to "go easy" on him and only beat his brains in with a quick flurry of punches and kicks. Hey, it's better than eating hot lead!

▲ Continuing on his sneaky way, Snake reaches another corridoor and tip-toes his way down it. The lighting has gotten better, so there's no need for a flashlight.



▲ Peeking around the corner, Snake spots another guard walking past the end of the hallway. This scene focuses on showing how realisic the shadows are.



▲ There's an abrupt cut to the next scene, where Snake has already put his prey into a chokehold. Apparently the entire animation for that move wasn't yet finished.

▲ The scene changes to the interior of some kind of control room, which seems to be heavily guarded for some reason. A large glass window divides the room.

▲ After tossing an ammo clip to distract a guard (another one of Snake's new tricks), he takes a dive off the stairs, landing in a roll that gets him to safety.

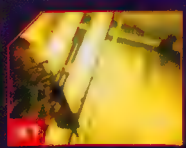
▲ We cut away to see a unit of guards coming down the stairs. These guys are more professional, and systematically search the area trying to find Snake.

▲ Opening a locker door, Snake makes a grisley discovery. This poor guy must've had his throat slit when the ship was taken over, and then stashed here.

▲ The limp corpse falls flat on its face at Snake's feet. If a guard had been close by, the sound may have alerted them. As it is, Snake's got a mess on his hands.

▲ Fortunately, Snake can now drag bodies and hide them in spots like this. In fact, you'll have to clean up after yourself like this or you'll alert the other guards.

▲ Another scene cut, and we arrive at one of the coolest parts of the trailer (it got BIG cheers from the fans at E3). A mystery figure approaches a lone guard...



▲ ...the guard lowers his rifle, and then BAM! The mystery man shoots him right between the eyes at point-blank range. What kind of cold hearted guy is this?

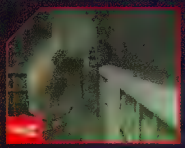
▲ Ah, there's the answer. It's Revolver Ocelot, the only surviving member of Fox Hound from the last game. He's back, and apparently has a new hand.

▲ Another scene change, and the music's starting to pick up the pace. We see a mystery woman in Snake's crosshairs, but she doesn't seem too concerned...

PlayStation 2

▲ The mystery woman starts to move, slowly at first, dropping the arm that's holding her knife. You'd think Snake would yell "Freeze!" or something, but...

▲ ...it probably wouldn't matter, 'cause this girl is *fast*. She whips around in a circle, with that wicked motion blur that was used so much in *MGS*...



▲ ...and swings around to throw a dagger right at Snake. The motion blur and slow motion effects here are very cool, making this girl an instant badass.

▲ As the dagger flies towards Snake, it cuts through the air leaving a distorted ripple, like the bullet effects in *The Matrix*. People, this looks DAMN COOL.

▲ Snake is still the faster of the two, though and after swiftly avoiding the dagger, lands down on one knee with his gun securely targeted at the girl.

▲ The girl, however, has used the confusion to whip out a gun of her own, and now the two are at a standoff. Wanna bet these two end up on the same side?

▲ Back to those wacky guards again, who have donned infra red goggles in an attempt to finally get the drop on Solid Snake. They move out quickly...

▲ ...and race down the hall in step with each other. Actually, they're *so* in step with each other that they seem to move as one, like a long snake or something.

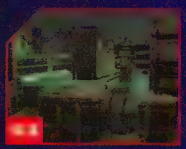
▲ However, infrared goggles or not, Snake sees 'em coming. This is a really good shot of Snake's hair, which looks pretty realistic. His bandana flows nice, too.

▲ As the view shifts further back, we see the full situation. Snake has the advantage because his pursuers are confined to a tight hallway, and can't surround him.

▲ Enough of this hiding stuff, it's time to let 'em have it! Turning the corner, Snake begins to fire away into the group of soldiers, who have nowhere to hide.

▲ Switching to first-person view, Snake can even target the many pipes lining the walls, causing scalding-hot steam to shoot out and burn the guards.

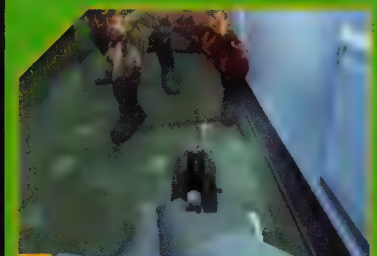
▲ A quick cut to another action scene, where we rejoin the one-on-one battle with the mystery girl. She and Snake both trade fire while running for cover.



▲ Snake sets up behind some crates and continues to fire. The storm is still raging, giving the scene a very gritty and realistic feel. The action here is fierce.

▲ Different action scenes begin to come in rapid-fire succession. Here Snake runs halfway down a staircase, then leaps into a quick roll at the bottom.

Snake is Discovered, and it all Hits the Fan!



▲ Fed up with not being able to [illegible] the guards' shields, Snake [illegible] and finally ends the situation. By aiming just a little bit under the bottom of their shields, he takes out their legs, and the soldiers drop. You can hit enemies anywhere, with varying effects.

▲ Snake gets jumped by a group of soldiers on a catwalk, and sends 'em flying over the rails with a few well-placed shots. Bullet casings fly everywhere.

▲ Since the plan with the infra-red [illegible] didn't work, they show up with riot shields. Snake shoots into them, but they hold.

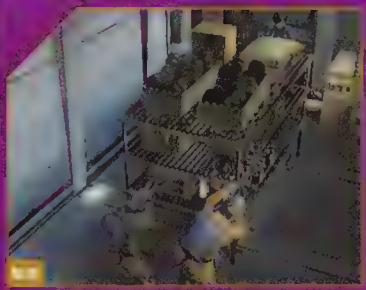
▲ [illegible] of Snake firing off his weapon, and he really looks like a badass. His hands jump back with the kick of the gun when he fires.

▲ Under heavy fire, Snake hits the deck and reloads. You can tell that he's been battling in this area for awhile, from leaking pipes and piles of shell casings.

▲ One guard gets the bright idea to shoot out the lights, since they have infra-red goggles and Snake doesn't. Those guys are pretty smart this time around!

▲ We cut back to a new scene in the control room, where Snake is trapped against impossible odds. The window above him is shot out, and glass falls everywhere.

Real-World Physics Demonstration



▲ As Snake is pinned down by two soldiers, we're treated to an amazing demonstration of the game's real-life physics engine. Numerous things on the shelf get knocked off, shot and shattered, and each of the items react as they should in real life. At one point, a bag of powder is shot and Snake actually sneezes!

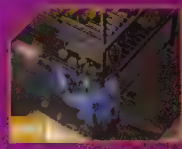
▲ After the window shatters, Snake jumps up and fires off a few rounds before having to duck for cover again. Man, that's a lot of guards piling in there!

▲ It doesn't look good for Snake. His enemies are on higher ground, and there's nowhere to escape to. *Metal Gear* focuses on sneaking, but the action is hot!

▲ We don't get to see the resolution to the last firefight, but this next part of the trailer is even cooler. We see that Snake is trapped in a stockroom.

▲ Here's our personal favorite part of this scene. In their overly enthusiastic attempt to kill Snake, the guards open fire on a harmless bunch of glass bottles...

▲ ...and they each shatter differently depending on how and where they were hit. Even better, the liquid inside them oozes to the floor and forms puddles.

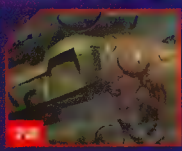


▲ Snake can now fire while ducking, and he can quickly turn to shoot around a corner while staying in the crouched position. He continues to fire away.

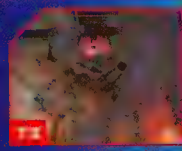
▲ Things calm down a bit, as we stare at the new *Metal Gear Ray* from a distance. Several credits are shown in between illustrations of some of the characters.

▲ As we gear up for the grand finale, the music becomes very dramatic. We catch a glimpse of *Metal Gear Ray*'s "arms", which are used to move underwater.

▲ A chorus kicks into the classic *Metal Gear* theme now, and it sounds so damn good you want to cry. Snake is running all-out away from explosions.

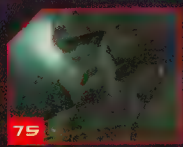


▲ Back to glimpses at *Metal Gear Ray*, which, by the way, is named after "Manta Ray", and its ability to swim. The storm outside rages even harder.



▲ Snake leaps over the railing amid explosions in one of the coolest uses of slow-motion we've ever seen. At this point, Konami already has our money.

▲ The music rises to a climax, and then comes to an abrupt stop as the title of this unbelievable game appears on screen. At E3, everyone cheered like crazy.

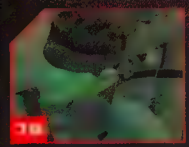


▲ But wait, the trailer ain't over yet! The action kicks back into full swing, as we see a raging *Metal Gear Ray* acting like Godzilla, stomping on the deck of the ship!

▲ Snake ducks around a corner, takes a look up at the metal monster and says to Otacon over his Codec: "Otacon, this is bad". What an understatement!

▲ Now for a bit of comedy. Snake is shown climbing down a ladder, behind a massive group of soldiers. The sheer number of them is very impressive.

▲ Being the stealthy guy that Snake is, he crawls across the room behind them, as they stare intently on at whatever it is they're looking at.



▲ Snake finally reaches the other end of the room, and ducks behind a crate. He's safe, that is, until he gets an uncontrollable urge to sneeze...

▲ GAH! That sneeze was all it took to alert a roomfull of guards! This was a classic moment that got big laughs from the crowds who saw it.

▲ Comedy bit part two: Remember that poor guard who got knocked out with Snake's tranquilizer dart WAY back at the beginning of the trailer?

▲ He's still out cold, that is, until his partner walks up and gives him the good ol' "kick to the head" wake up call. Will this really happen in the game?

▲ As our groggy friend gets up to his feet, he has no idea what happened. Funny stuff. Well, that's it for our look at the trailer — more when we get it.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

Publisher: Koei
Developer: Omega Force
Available: October
Type: Action
# of Players: 1
# of Discs: 1

Fighting game meets historical sim in Koei's action-packed launch title

While it's set in ancient China during the same time period as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* series, and draws heavily on historical events, *Dynasty Warriors 2* is anything but a meticulously detailed war simulation — or much like the original *Dynasty Warriors*, for that matter. Instead, it puts you directly onto the field of battle as one of nine legendary Chinese warriors responsible for aiding in your kingdom's victory, and generally kicking some serious butt.

Taking place on battlefields nearly one square mile in size, the game will focus on delivering non-stop action with just enough strategy to keep it from becoming a mindless stab-fest. For instance, you may have to leap onto horseback and dart across the battlefield to defend a commander in trouble. Not only that, but enemy soldiers will actually respond to your prowess (or lack thereof) on the battlefield, causing lesser enemies to flee at your sight, or enemy commanders to order in their best heroes to end your life.

Thankfully, you'll have more than just your basic staff, sword, or other melee weapon at your disposal. Each warrior has a frenzied power attack that can be initiated once your spirit meter is fully charged that deftly slashes through enemies for several seconds. There's also a bow and arrows, fired from first-person view, for hitting archers in towers and executing other ranged attacks. And since you can mount and ride unoccupied horses when you find them, horseback combat also comes into the picture.

This is one of nine legendary Chinese warriors you can play as.

Each battle, of which you must win five, has its own specific objective (whether it be to capture an enemy commander, or so on) and up to 1,000 soldiers may represent each side. Out of those, as many as 40 highly detailed characters will be on-screen at one time with zero slowdown, making for what is easily one of the most technically impressive action games ever. Add in flying sparks, weapon trails, and detailed surroundings and you've also got a candidate for best-looking action game, period.

Sound right up your alley? Well, you won't have to wait long to find out — Koei is planning on having *Dynasty Warriors 2* ready for PlayStation 2's release on October 26, so expect a full review soon.

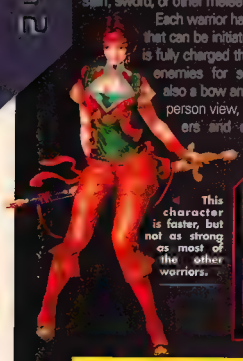
— Randy Nelson

Ranged Attacks

In addition to melee weapons such as staffs and swords, you'll be able to utilize a bow and arrow on the battlefield. This can be helpful in picking off archers from towers or simply hitting enemies from afar before they can attack you.

In order to fire your bow, you switch into first-person mode and can scan the terrain for your target.

Firing it with this many enemies around isn't really suggested, but you can see how accurate you can get.

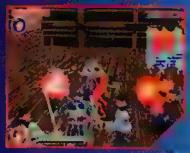


This character is faster, but not as strong as most of the other warriors.

No matter which of the three kingdoms you're fighting for, you'll have to win five battles across China to come out victorious.

Attacks from your melee weapon will be accompanied by weapon trails and brilliant spark showers.

Despite being incredibly hefty, even this formidable warrior can mount a horse and gain a height and speed advantage against his enemies.



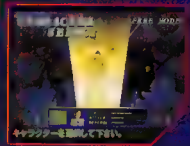
The scenery will vary greatly from mission to mission. This one, for instance, takes place onboard a series of ships connected by planks.

Berserker Rage

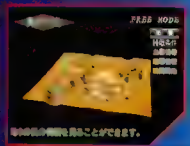
Once your spirit meter is fully charged, your character will be able to unleash a flurry of melee weapon attacks and carve a path through dozens of enemies for several seconds — all accompanied by brilliant weapon trails and sparks.

Each warrior has his own unique power attack — this one, for instance, results in large sweeping moves.

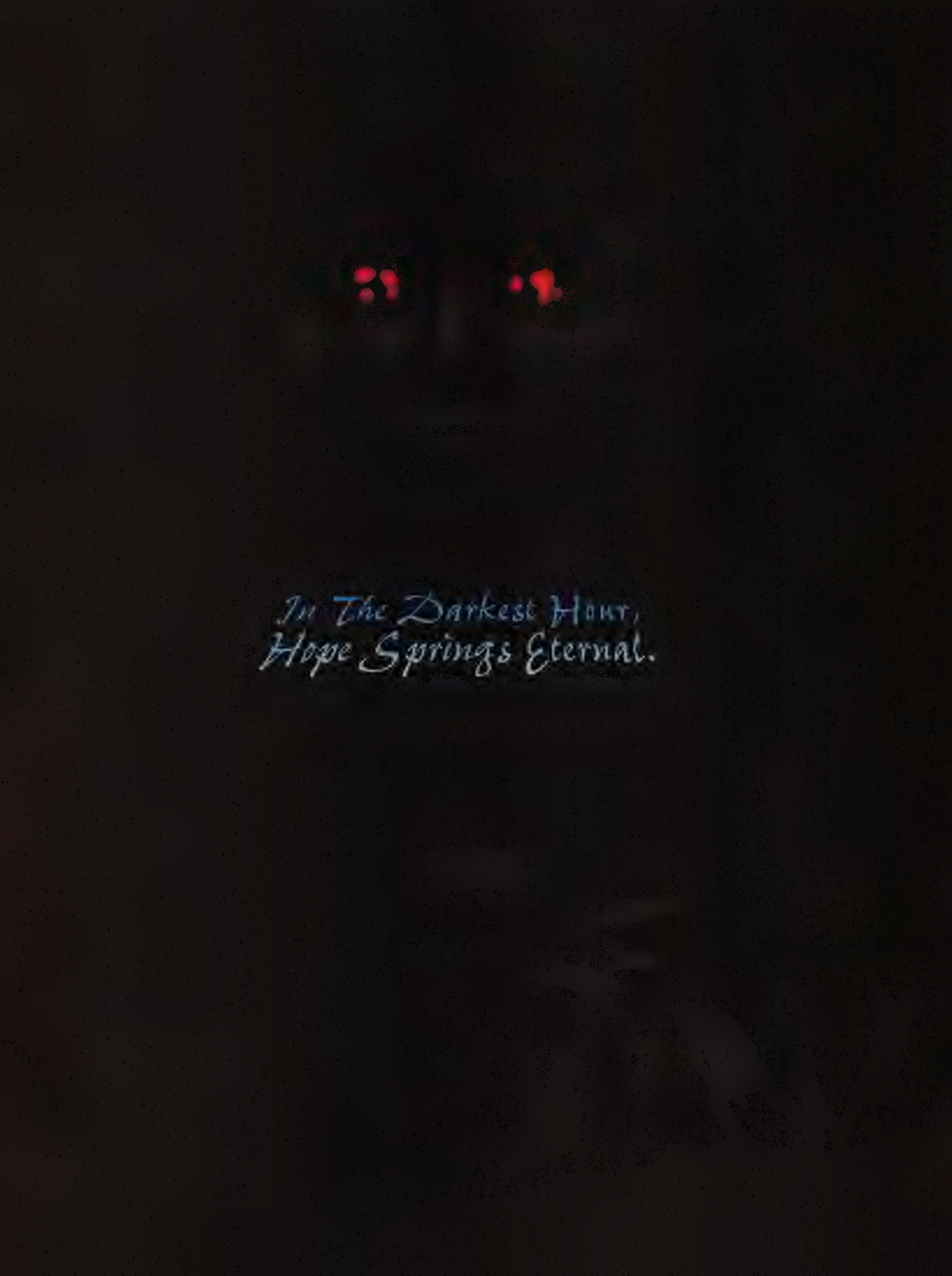
On the other hand, this attack stays closer to the warrior, but is far more frenzied. Someone's in a world of hurt...



There will be nine legendary warriors to play as, each with unique attack, defense, and health attributes. Make your choice wisely.



Before each battle, a topographical map of the battlefield is displayed and shows the location of your army's units in relation to the enemy's.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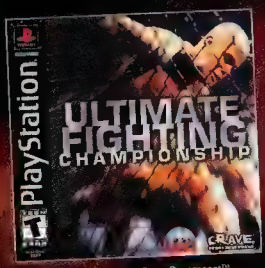

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Sega Dreamcast™ screen shots shown.

Most of the cars feature some cool graphic designs and decals.

Midnight Club

A No-Holds-Barred Racer

As one of the first racers to hit the Playstation 2 this fall, *Midnight Racer* hopes to blow past its stiff competition: *Ridge Racer V* and *GT 2000*. Although surpassing these hit franchises will be quite a task, *Midnight Club* includes a few elements that set it apart from the rest.

Midnight Club allows players to roam anywhere at anytime. That means whether you are driving through London, New York, or Tokyo, you must rely on your own judgement to discover the most efficient path to the goal. This open-ended system may require you to go through parks, buildings, or even water! However, *MC* isn't a chaotic destruction-fest like the *Twisted Metal* series. If you get that masochistic itch to torture pedestrians and disregard many other laws , you'll have to worry about Five-0 putting a halt on your victory quest.

Graphically, the game continues to improve from previous versions; now smoke spins off skidding tires; rain turns the street into a shiny mirror, which reflects cars, buildings, and lights. Finally, the car models and the environments continue to look promising.

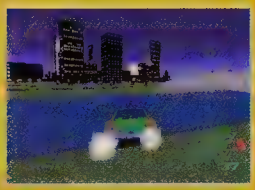
Lets hope that these improvements will continue up until the release date this fall. If so, *Midnight Club* could steal some of the glory from the big boys.

— Chet Barber

Publisher: Rockstar Games
Developer: Angel Studios
Available: Fall
Type: Racing
# of Players: 1-2
# of Discs: 1

The Road Less Travelled...

Driving through water, parks, and sidewalks are all an integral part of finding the best route to victory



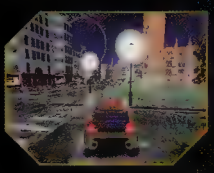
▲ Don't be afraid of good old Mr. H2O. He could turn out to be your friend!

▲ Although parks could be a nice shortcut, plowing through trees certainly won't save you any time.

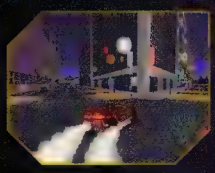
▲ If you plan to use the sidewalks, or go through buildings, be sure not to hit anybody... well, maybe one or two just for fun!

▲ YEEEHAW! As in any racing game, perfecting the power slide is important to win. Smoke 'em if you got 'em!

▲ Don't expect to be let in any more malls after this little excursion.



▲ The rain and mirroring effects will surely wow all PS2 cynics.



▲ Although a bit exaggerated, burning rubber creates some cool smoke effects.

The Honda CRX is a bit old, but still nimble.

Book 'em, Dano!

...s bunch. If you ... try a ... best just ... as much as possible.

▲ The forever evil side-swipe! Run him into a building, or suffer the consequences of a night in jail with "Big Daddy".

▲ If you're being pursued by one cop, just hit his car from behind and knock him out of the way.

KESSEN

War is hell, but this game is looking heavenly

We recently got a chance to go hands-on with the U.S. version of the historical war sim *Kessen*, which will hit these shores at the PlayStation2 launch by way of Electronic Arts. There's been no doubting that the game is a bona fide audio-visual epic — it's the gameplay that's just now coming into focus, and it too is looking to up the ante for console strategy.

Among the stand-outs from our advance look at the game are the special attacks that can be executed by your forces — everything from rifle barrages to horse charges to brutal cannonades. It's even possible to send a general in to execute a vicious one-man raid. In fitting with the rest of the game, they're highly cinematic and suitably bone-jarring. It's also possible to persuade enemy generals to defect to your side, and there are absolutely loads of audio cues from your various generals alerting you to their status and course of action, which makes for a very involving experience thus far.

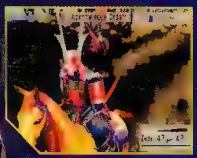
Both grandiose and historically accurate, *Kessen* might just be the stuff strategy buff's dreams are made of. We'll have a review soon, so sit tight.

— Randy Nelson

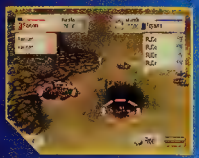
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Koei
Release Date: October
Type: Strategy
# of Players: 1
# of Discs: 1

▲ Sometimes, a general has to take matters into his own hands. When he does, the outcome isn't pretty.

▲ You can either choose to view your troops' actions from far above or (better yet) right down at ground level.



▲ As your general leads his troops into battle, their actions are presented with very cinematic flair.



▲ Troop movement and order issuing is handled from a rotating 3D world map which represents topographical variations and obstacles.

◀ This lethal rifle barrage is just one of the many special attacks your generals can order up for enemy troops.

SMUGGLER'S RUN

Rockstar's still running from the law

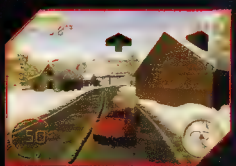
Since our last preview of the game, *Smuggler's Run* has dramatically improved. The three main environments are now more detailed, the framerate's higher and smoother, and the computer-controlled vehicles are a lot smarter. Not only that, but all the different gameplay elements are starting to come together nicely. It's amazing how fun and challenging a simple premise, like smuggling black market items from point A to point B, can be.

While there's no 100% guarantee, Angel Studios is hoping to include around 35 different vehicles, ranging from modified buggies to rally cars, and three main play modes (Campaign, Melee and Multiplayer) in the finished product. Fortunately for gamers, *Smuggler's Run* is looking to ship on the PlayStation2's launch day, October 26th. We know... it's still a long way away. That's why we're hooking you up with these brand spankin' new screenshots straight from the PS2 development kit. Enjoy!

— Stephen Frost

Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: Angel Studios
Available: October
Type: Racing/Action
# of Players: 1-2
# of Discs: 1

▲ There's quite a bit of detail in the environments, including countless trees, bushes and rocks. And considering each level is around 15 square miles in size, there's a lot to see.



▲ While you'll come across roads from time to time, the best route is most often off-road. That's why it helps to be driving a buggy and not a Volvo.

▲ Unfortunately, rival gangs aren't going to be the only people on your tail. Border patrols appear frequently and will do everything to try to stop you.

◀ By using the arrow, located at the top of the screen, and the map, you can pretty much locate the merchandise without a problem. Just be on the lookout for rival gangs.

Ready To Rumble Round 2

Midway's wild boxing game is back

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Available: November
Type: Boxing
# of Players: 1-2
# of Disc: 1

Rather than present licensed pugilists from the world of professional boxing, the original *Ready 2 Rumble* took a more comical cartoon-style approach to the sport. Its sequel, destined to arrive just a matter of days after PlayStation2's launch at the end of October, looks to patch some of the holes that kept the original from becoming a true king of the ring.

From a gameplay standpoint, *Ready 2 Rumble Round 2* promises to address the first game's AI issues by featuring smarter opponents that boast more variety in their in-ring strategies. Also slated for inclusion is realistic grappling, a completely re-designed training mode, and new moves for each of the 18 boxers (seven new and 11 returning). If you thought the first game's hidden character roster bordered on bizarre, you'll certainly get a kick out of two of the planned additions for its sequel: Basketball great Shaquille O'Neal and king of pop Michael Jackson. No, that's not a joke.

In addition to overall gameplay tuning, the game will also feature a revamped, calendar-based season mode with a complete storyline for each boxer and unlockable bonuses for winning matches, such as new training equipment and additional moves.

Graphically, the game will offer a slew of new touches made possible by the polygon-pushing muscle and special effects of the PS2. Apart from the boxers themselves being more detailed and better animated, you can look forward to a number of other characters appearing in and around the ring during fights, such as ring girls, corner men, and photographers – all in an attempt to boost the realism factor that much more. A number of new special effects will be used to heighten the experience, including motion-blur, flowing ring attire, improved lighting, and a swimming screen effect when getting up from a knockdown.

So far, *Ready 2 Rumble Round 2* is looking quite impressive, and should offer a good alternative to the more simulation-intensive boxing games coming to PS2. Look for a full review of the game in an upcoming issue.

— Randy Nelson

▲ Michael Buffer is once again lending his trademark "let's get ready to rrrumble!" call to the game, along with full ring announcer voice-over.

▲ You can expect the fighters' reactions to hits to be even more outrageous than in the original game.

New Effects

This wouldn't be a first-round PS2 game unless it had some impressive special effects to flaunt. Motion blur and dizziness effects not only look

▲ There'll be 18 initially selectable boxers, but, as usual, several bonus characters others will be unlockable.

▲ Motion-blurring is now used to add more realistic impact to the fast-paced boxing action.

your feet.

▲ You'll be able to unleash new Rumble flurries once your Rumble meter is filled.

▲ There'll be several new camera modes to select from, including this default angle that zooms to a close-up when the fighters get near each other.

▲ Viewing the action from over your boxer's shoulder should aid in telling exactly where your punches are going to land.

▲ First-person mode is back, enhanced by the inclusion of cool-looking motion blur effects.

Familiar Faces

▲ Afro Thunder's back, and talking more trash than ever. His "fro motion and funky moves promise to be smooth as silk.

▲ The lovely Selene Strike sports a tight new costume with realistically flowing fabric, as well as other, um... "optimized accessories".

Motor Mayhem

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Beyond Games
Release Date: Fall
Type: Car Combat
# of Players: 1-2
# of Discs: 1

An updated look at the future of car combat

There still hasn't been any word of a PlayStation2 version of either *Twisted Metal* or *Vigilante 8*, which is kind of disappointing. However, that doesn't mean the console won't have a car combat title within the near future. As this preview is being written, Beyond Games is nearing completion of its futuristic title, *Motor Mayhem*. Those of you with sharp eyes and a good memory will remember that we mentioned this game a few issues back. And while there still isn't any new info available, we can show you a handful of new concept screenshots. This isn't quite what the end product will look like, but it should be pretty close. Enjoy the ride.

— Stephen Frost

One good piece of advice is not to mess with a rock golem when it's driving around on a huge steam roller. It would probably be the last thing you ever do.

While these screenshots don't represent what the finished game will look like, they do give you a good idea of what to expect. We don't know about you, but we're excited.

Here's a look at one of the other characters in the game. She pilots a six-wheeled mini-tank with several guns and plenty of missile launchers. You don't want to mess with her.

More so than in other car combat titles, *Motor Mayhem* will focus a lot on the characters which drive the various vehicles. Each has their own distinct personalities and attacks. This has got to be one hard dude.

The lighter vehicles, like this motorcycle, can jump higher and reach areas that the other, larger, vehicles have a more difficult time getting to. The drawback is that the lighter vehicles can't hold that much armor.

NASCAR 2001

Another look at the prettiest NASCAR title yet

Well, we pretty much gave you all the facts about this game in the last issue of PSM, so we'll just let these new screenshots speak for themselves. Well, for those two of you who were in a coma or something, we'll give you the sum up. This latest version of *NASCAR* will feature 33 of the top active drivers (you can never have too many), 18 official tracks (including Daytona) and a completely rebuilt game engine developed specifically for the PlayStation2. Got it? Good. Now, take a gander at these screens before we call Dale Earnhardt on you.

— Stephen Frost

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Sports
Available: Fall
Type: Racing
# of Players: 1-2
# of Discs: 1

When they say that the cars are modeled exactly like their real-life counterparts, they mean it. Even the ads on the hoods are perfect.

Virtually every part of the vehicle can be damaged, and broken off. Get into too many wrecks and you'll end up seeing your engine, or at least what's left of it.

Since the PS2 is capable of rendering a large number of particle-based effects, you can have plenty of smoke and sparks appear and not have the framerate drop at all.

The intelligence of the computer controlled cars is top-notch. If you screw them over, they'll come back at you later on. Give them their space or you'll end up in an accident like this one.

Check out this close up of one of the cars. You can clearly see the driver and the metal restraint system. The driver will even move his head and arms, depending on what's going on. That's realistic.

It's not hard to look cool while pulling a Double Backflip...

Especially when you land an [illegible] your [illegible]

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

Sure, mom told you not to ride your bike in the house, but she's never seen Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX from Acclaim Max Sports. With 12 vert, dirt and street courses to tear up, you'll be ripping like the pros in no time. Use the Trick Modifier to create more than 1,300 insane tricks and combos. And with 10 sick multi-player games including Longest Grind and Gnarliest Crash, the couch will mold to your butt long before you put down the controller.

Featured pros:
Dave Mirra, Ryan Nyquist, Leigh Ramsdell, Mike Laird, Troy McMurray, Kevin Harlan, Joey Garcia, Shaun Butler, Chad Kagy and Tim Mirra.

Wild soundtrack: Sublime, Cypress Hill, Rancid, Social Distortion, Deftones, Pennywise, Drop Kick Murphys, 59 Times the Pain and more...

Developed by Z-AXIS

GAME BOY COLOR

Sega Dreamcast

PlayStation

EVERYONE E Mild Language

ESRB

Acclaim MAX SPORTS

Miracle Boy and Nyquist

Slim Jim

UCS

www.acclaimmaxsports.com

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ARMORED CORE 2

▶ Show no mercy! Blast them all straight to hell!

Publisher: From Software
Developer: From Software
Available: October
Type: Action
# of Players: 1-2
# of Discs: 1

The Introduction of Mech Games on PS2

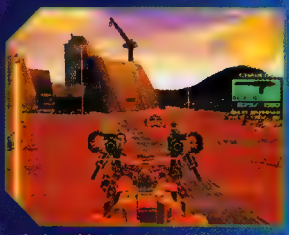
Although mech games have never received a popular following in the U.S., From Software may gain a few fans when it releases its mech game this fall. If the already crisp graphics don't attract gamers, *Armored Core 2*'s fast-paced gameplay will.

The control scheme and look of the game is similar to *Virtual On*. On the playing field, it is important to remember to blast and slice away at enemies while simultaneously avoiding enemy fire. This leaves little time for breaks; you must constantly be on your toes. To destroy other mechanized enemies, From software has included many different weapons, such as machine guns, rockets, and swords. In addition to customizing various weapons, you can also customize all parts of your mech, including your head, torso, arms, and legs. However, customizing your mech isn't free.

Players must chose and complete missions as a sort of mercenary to earn money. The more missions you complete, and enemies you destroy, the more money you will earn. However, this game isn't simply destruction and chaos. If you waste tons of ammo, and take too much damage, you'll end up spending your profits on supplies and repairs. It seems that this added strategy to the game will keep it varied and interesting.

Although our version is still incomplete, From Software will also include an Arena mode. Arena mode could be a one-on-one fighter which closely resembles *Virtual On*; or, it could be an enclosed area full of other sorts of enemies which draws ideas from games like *Smash TV*. Despite the outcome of the final version, judging from the way the game plays now, and the variety of elements included, *Armored Core 2* looks promising.

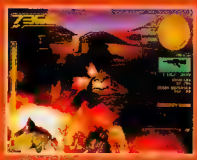
— Chet Barber

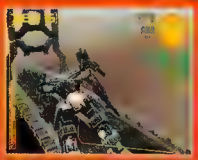


▲ The beautiful color palette and sharp graphics make for beautiful scenery.

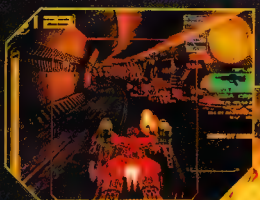
Dodging Enemy Fire

Quickly finding an enemy's attack method and capabilities





enemy range.



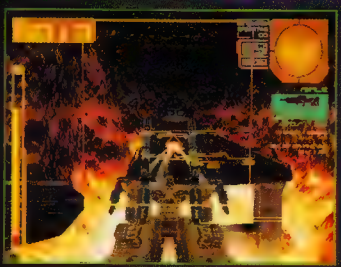
▼ We don't suggest putting yourself in such precarious positions. Doing so won't only mark the end of your mech, but cost you tons of money!

▲ The lighting effects you'll see in the tunnel are eerie, yet gorgeous.

Equipping Various Parts

▲ Customizing your legs may seem less exciting than your guns, but without a stable base, your mech will be thrashed.

▲ Another boring, yet necessary, component is the radiator. Overheating could mean death.



◀ Check out that lava — Smokin'! Stare too long and you will get burned.

◀ Doing a fly-by is a safe way to score a couple of hits on target.

▶ On cliffs and mountains, watch out for enemies above. They will pound you!

PlayStation

Danger Never Looked So Good!

COLLECTORS ITEM!
Manual features exclusive character sketches, bios and artwork from the creators!

3rd person action adventure has never been sexier with DANGER GIRL, the only videogame based on the best-selling comic book series by J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell.

Dare to take control of 3 beautiful yet lethal Danger Girls in an espionage-themed thrill-ride deemed too dangerous for any man to handle!

Varied modes of play: stealth, sniper and more

Dozens of weapons (whips—need we say more?)

Original art by the creators

Classic Danger Girl signature moves

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Animated Blood
Suggestive Themes

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SPACE

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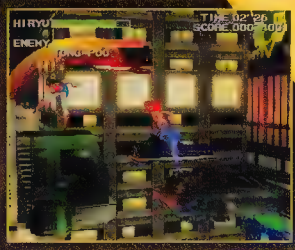
The Amazing Hero is Back!

STRIDER 2™



A dark and dangerous future. An elusive hero. Now, one of the world's most legendary heroes, Strider Hiryu, returns on the PlayStation® game console. Armed with his light sword, Strider blazes through the darkness to battle the evil dictator, Grandmaster. Featuring 2 discs of gritty action adventure, this highly anticipated sequel also includes an incredible bonus…the complete, original Strider adventure.

PlayStation

EVERYONE E Animated Violence

CAPCOM EDGE

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Reviews

the most honest, dependable, unbiased playstation reviews on the planet—period

Yes, the PlayStation is incredible — but that doesn't mean all of its games are going to knock your socks off. Our reviews give you the total breakdown on all the latest titles, so you know when to buy and when to cry.

Games Reviewed This Month

Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness. . pg. 50
Ball Breakers . . . . . pg. 50
Rampage Through Time . . . . . pg. 51
NCAA GameBreaker 2001. . . . . pg. 51
NCAA Football 2001 . . . . . pg. 52
Valkyrie Profile. . . . . pg. 55
X-Men Mutant Academy . . . . . pg. 56
Mortal Kombat Special Forces. . . pg. 56
NFL GameDay 2001. . . . . pg. 59

Breaking it all down, PSM style

These are the categories that we think are most important when rating a game. Each is rated on a scale from 1 to 5.

This is the Game Summary. It's kind of like "Cliff's Notes" for all you lazy types who won't read the whole review.

With our Replay Chart, you can see the potential lifespan of a game at a glance! Some games are great fun at first, but quickly wear thin. Others are tough to get into, but really take off if you stick with 'em. A 5 means that you will be playing it non-stop, while a 1 means its practically in the closet.

The PSM Rating Scale

We here at PSM want you to know that we take our reviews very seriously. Just like you, we've been burnt before by bad games (and these days, it ain't so easy to get the store to take 'em back!). So when we sit down to review a new title, we look at it like this: if we had just shelled out fifty or so hard-earned bucks for the game, how satisfied would we be?

To summarize a game's overall worth, we use the traditional "five-star" ratings scale. If we give a game a full five stars, it's our guarantee that you can't go wrong with it, so go out there and pick it up!

What the ratings mean:

5 — A PlayStation classic that no fan should be without. A can't-miss game, no matter who you are!

4 — A really well-done game. If you're a fan of the genre, you should definitely check this one out.

3 — A pretty good game. It has its share of rough spots, but it has some redeeming qualities, as well.

2 — Maybe worth a quick look if you're a diehard fan of the genre or license, otherwise, don't bother.

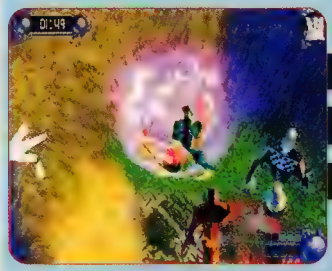
1 — Don't even make eye-contact with this one—it's not worth one second of your time.

Backlog

These are our ratings for some of the games released over the past several months. Check 'em out for any titles you may have missed!

Alundra 2 ●●●1/2
Armored Core: Arena ●●●1/2
Armorines: S.W.A.R.M. ●1/2
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes ●
Colony Wars: Red Sun ●●●●1/2
Countdown Vampires ●
Covert Ops: Dawn ●●●1/2
Chrono Cross ●●●●1/2
Crusaders Of Might And Magic ●
Deception III: Delusion ●●●1/2
Die Hard Trilogy 2 ●●●1/2
Eagle One: Harrier Attack ●●●1/2
ECW Hardcore Revolution ●●
Family Game Pack ●●1/2
Front Mission 3 ●●●1/2
Galerians ●●●●
Gauntlet Legends ●●●1/2
Gekido ●●●1/2
Grind Session ●●●1/2
Grudge Warriors ●●
Hot Shots 2 ●●●1/2
Hydro Thunder ●●●1/2
Koudelka ●●●●
Kurt Warner Arena Football ●1/2
Legend Of Dragoon ●●●●1/2
Legend Of Mana ●●●
MediEvil II ●●●
Micro Maniacs ●●●●
MLB 2001 ●●●●
Mobil 1 Championship ●●●●
Mr. Driller ●●●1/2
NASCAR Rumble ●●●●
NBA Shootout 2000 ●●●1/2
NFS: Porsche Unleashed ●●●
NHL 2000 ●●●●
NHL Rock The Rink ●●●1/2
Nightmare Creatures II ●●1/2
Railroad Tycoon II ●●●
Rayman 2 ●●●●
Rhapsody ●●●●
Reel Fishing II ●1/2
Road Rash 2: Jailbreak ●●1/2
Rollcage Stage II ●●●●1/2
RPG Maker ●●●●
Runabout 2 ●●
Silent Bomber ●●●●
Sosa's High Heat Baseball ●●
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol ●●●●
Speed Punks ●●●1/2
Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles ●●
Street Fighter EX2 Plus ●●●
Street Sk8er 2 ●●●●
Strider 1&2 ●●●
Superbike 2000 ●●1/2
Surf Riders ●●
Syphon Filter 2 ●●●●
Test Drive Le Mans ●●1/2
Threads Of Fate ●●●1/2
Vagrant Story ●●●●
Vanark ●●
Vanguard Bandits ●●●
Who/Millionaire? ●1/2
Wild Arms 2: Ignition ●●●
Worms Armageddon ●●●●1/2
WWF Smackdown ●●●●

Ball Breakers



PUBLISHER
Take-Two Interactive

DEVELOPER
Lost Toys

TYPE OF GAME
Action

◀ The super tornado attack will plaster your enemies, however, this move should be reserved for only the toughest situations.

YES, IT DOES HURT

Doesn't *Ball Breakers* sound like a great name for a dating game? Imagine playing a lonely high school boy trying his luck with fellow female classmates? However, because of his bad luck, he doesn't encounter his dream-girl, but a series of *Ball Breakers*.

Unfortunately, the real "Ball Breakers" is not half as interesting. You can choose from 6 characters with varying strengths and weaknesses. Each character moves around on top of a ball instead of legs. Keeping your ball is essential to survival; once you lose your ball, you die — interesting concept! Besides holding onto your ball, you must complete a series of simple mini-games within a time limit. These games include Last Man Rolling (a fighter), Run the Gauntlet (a maze game), King of the Hill, Golf, etc. The seven different games add some variety, and are spread out through 10 levels. This roughly equals 80 stages. However, playing these games quickly becomes repetitive, and the increasing difficulty creates tedious, rather than challenging, gameplay.

On the other hand, this game does have its positive aspects. The basic concept of rolling around on a ball is different. The dark atmosphere feels appropriate, and the techno-like music suits futuristic images. Perhaps if Lost Toys added more obstacles in each stage, created more intricate mazes, and included more items and gadgets for your character, the gameplay would be more interesting and intense.

This wishful thinking seems to matter little in the face of a 10 dollar price tag. The cost seems indicative of a game that is simplistic and rushed. Although 10 dollars does make this game slightly more attractive, we still can't recommend a title that will only hold your attention for a hour. Save your 10 bucks and put it towards purchasing a Greatest Hits game for 20 dollars.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN

GAME ★ SUMMARY

- ▲ Having balls for legs is different
- ▲ Decent soundtrack
- ▼ Poor control
- ▼ Sub-par graphics
- ▼ Little originality
- ▼ Repetitive gameplay

PSM FINAL SCORE:

SAVE YOUR MONEY FOR SOMETHING ELSE

Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

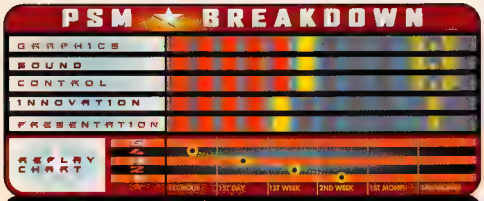
CAN NAMCO 1-UP THE PAC-MAN?

At a quick glance, *Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness* may seem to look and play a lot like the previously released *Pac-Man World*, but the two games are actually quite different. *World* was more of an action/platform title, while *Maze Madness* sticks closer to its basic arcade roots. In that regard, this game caters even more to the mainstream market.

Ms. Pac-Man's latest adventure is presented in full 3D, but the basic goals, which were established in the original title, are still the same. You've still got to devour all the power pellets on the playing field, and take down all the ghosts that happen upon your path. Now, however, you'll also have to solve little puzzles that were designed to slow your progress. For the most part, these puzzles involve pushing around different types of blocks and collecting colored keys, so don't expect anything too complex. They can get a bit challenging at times, but for the most part, are pretty straightforward.

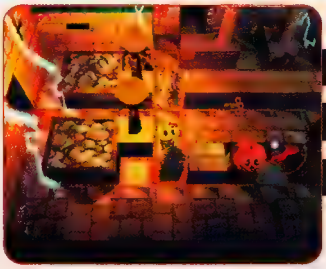
While there's a lot of variety in the backgrounds and level designs, *Ms. Pac-Man* still can't quite compete with the man when it comes to sheer gameplay variety.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN



GAME ★ SUMMARY

- ▲ Large number of levels to enjoy
- ▲ Easy to get into and play
- ▲ Soundtrack is top-notch
- ▼ Not much variety in gameplay
- ▼ Puzzles and mazes get repetitive quick



PUBLISHER
Namco

DEVELOPER
Namco

TYPE OF GAME
Action/Puzzle

◀ Lightning crackles as Ms. Pac-Man makes her way through the Haunted House stage. Scary, huh, gang?

After playing for about an hour, you've pretty much seen what the game has to offer. Sure, puzzles and mazes are laid out differently, but the overall experience remains exactly the same. You'll often be saying, "Didn't I do this before?" And that's the main problem here. There's just too many mazes and too little uniqueness. We would have preferred a game in the style of *World*, but taken to that next level. *Maze Madness* seems more like a step backwards in the evolution of the series.

◀ She's round, yellow and ready to mix it up in the maze. What more could a guy want?

Casual gamers will definitely still get a kick out of the nostalgic gameplay, but there isn't much here to draw in the diehards. Even fans of *World* will probably want to steer clear, unless they're in desperate need of that Pac fix.

PSM FINAL SCORE:

CASUALLY FUN, BUT NOT MUCH THAT'S NEW

NCAA GameBreaker 2001

PUBLISHER
989 Sports

DEVELOPER
Red Zone Interactive

GENRE
Football

A successful pitch to the running back can gain big yardage. Just don't accidentally touch L1 or R1, whatever you do!

TAPE YOUR FINGERS, PLUG YOUR EARS...

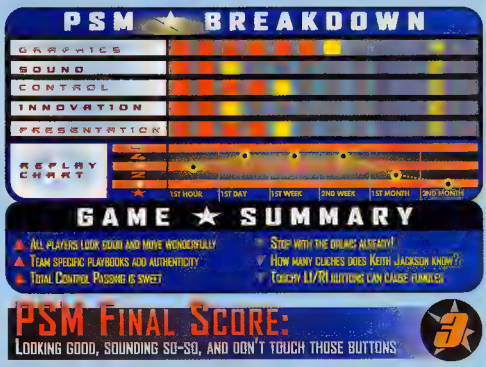
College football season is here and that means it's time to review college football games. *NCAA GameBreaker 2001* is 989 Sports' latest, and while it's looking pretty darn good, there are a few things that may cause a few problems for fans of the genre.

On the plus side, the players are wonderfully animated and motion captured, even more so than in *GameDay 2001*. They just seem more lifelike here. 989 has included team specific playbooks, which really add to the authenticity of the play and a tougher AI that was designed by NCAA Coaches and All-American players. And don't forget Total Control Passing, which makes the game even more realistic by allowing some leeway in your pass patterns.

The two main problems that plague *NCAA GameBreaker 2001* are centered in the sound and control areas. First off, there are the one touch pitch buttons (L1/R1), which make it really easy to get the ball to your running back. Unfortunately, they're located right under your index fingers, so if you happen to twitch while pushing another button or are a bit clumsy, you're going to be tossing the ball to an empty spot on the field when you least want to. Fumble-aya!

And then there's the sound, which follows a very predictable pattern: drum roll, crowd noise, Keith Jackson cliche, drum roll, crowd noise, Keith Jackson cliche, and so on, and on... After a while, we found ourselves turning off the sound, just so we wouldn't hear "You can't coach foot speed" for the thousandth time. A little randomization could've prevented this (drum roll after first down, cliche after second down, etc.); we don't know how 989 missed it.

If you love college football, then you're probably gonna love *NCAA GameBreaker 2001*. It is fun to play and sure is easy on the eyes. Just remember to plug your ears and tape your fingers.



PSM Final Score: Looking good, sounding so-so, and don't touch those buttons

Rampage Through Time

ENOUGH ALREADY, WE GET THE POINT!

Midway's latest incarnation of the arcade classic *Rampage* is, if anything, even less impressive than *Rampage World Tour* and *Rampage 2: Universal Tour*. We've now seen the formula rehashed so many times that it's bordering on the ridiculous. For anyone unfamiliar with the basic concept of the *Rampage* series, players take control of one of a variety of monsters and go from town to town (or time to time in this case) smashing buildings, fighting armies (as well as each other) and eating innocent civilians. Strangely enough, this time the game always has three players because the computer will control any extras.

The latest incarnation of this 2D classic looks and feels, for all essential purposes, exactly like the other ones. Each monster can punch, kick and even has a special attack that can be gained by eating a particular type of power up. The giant rat likes cheese, the Ape likes bananas and so on. Buildings are destroyed by first climbing up their sides and attacking them, then jumping off before the building collapses.

PUBLISHER
Midway

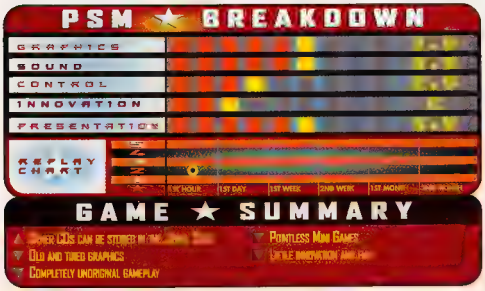
DEVELOPER
Midway

GENRE
Action

In the future, man will conquer distant peoples and colonize far off planets, but will still be helpless before the rage of giant rodents.

As far as innovation goes, there's a new monster, some truly pathetic mini-games and the title's main appeal, the chance to bash people from different times. Of course, Midway has, at best, a rough idea of what historical times were like and players are treated to such interesting times as "Pirate" and "Dickens", along with the compulsory Persian and Ancient Egyptian worlds. Even the vision of the future, as presented by *Rampage Through Time*, is a boring affair full of predictably science-fictiony bubble buildings and ray guns.

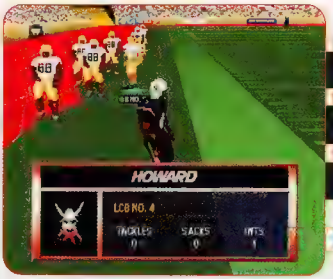
Each of the mini-games corresponds to one of the twenty time periods and each one is pointless and unoriginal, feeling like last minute add-ons intended to, and failing quite spectacularly to, distinguish the game from its predecessors. Sometimes the monsters must throw humans at each other in a top down view of the city, sometimes they must shoot little targets in a mocked up pistol range, never are they allowed to participate in any activity that resembles fun.



PSM Final Score: A horrific attempt at cashing in on an aging license

NCAA Football 2001

▲ It just wouldn't be college football without running over a ref or a band member.



◀ Every once in a while, lines that are supposed to be straight won't be. Pay no attention to those cardboard cutouts on the sideline.

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

DEVELOPER
EA Sports

TYPE OF GAME
Football

NEWER? YES. BETTER? WELL...

Football season is here once again and all of the game developers are shipping out the latest versions of their gridiron games, which means that EA Sports has released *NCAA Football 2001*. Of course, now the question is: did they make a better game? The answer is a definite yes... and no.

On the plus side, EA Sports does offer some very nice new touches. To begin with, there's Advanced Player Control. This neat innovation allows you to play any position on the offensive team. Yes, that means you can be the left guard if you want, but that position doesn't offer much excitement. Now you can streak down the field, call for the pass and make that diving catch. APC does bring a new angle to videogame football.

But that's not all... EA has also added a new Situation Mode, which allows you to create any college football situation — from trying to score in the last seconds of a game to battling back from a first quarter blowout. They've also added enhancements to the Create A School option. Now you can create your own team uniforms and use Greek lettering and fraternity logos on the jerseys (we've been playing as the Miskatonic Shuggoths Don't ask...).

Add to this a new Custom League Mode, the inclusion of the top 25 college teams as voted by EA customers, an improved running game, better defensive AI, and the new Bowl Championship Series ranking system, which guarantees that, if your team is good enough, you'll end up playing in the Orange Bowl National Championship, as well as the Nokia Sugar Bowl and the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl. What more could you want?

▲ Here's one of the four animations we kept seeing... over... and over... and over again.

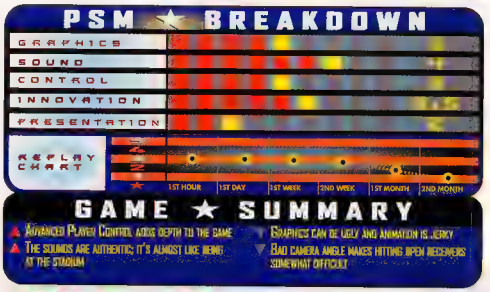
Ok, there are some things that fall into the minus column. First of all, while EA did modify the players' bodies so that they don't all look alike, there are a few problems that crop up. When the players aren't moving, they all tend to stand on the field like Gort, the robot from *Day The Earth Stood Still*. Several times, a player would just run right through another like he wasn't there. What happened to the collision detection? EA also claims to have added a ton of new animations, but after playing the game seven or eight times, we have to admit we saw the same four animations over and over again. In fact, after each kickoff, the same player pulls the same compatriot up from the same sitting position... every time!

The main gripe with the gameplay is the camera angle the game takes during passing plays. The camera never pulls back quite far enough, so it's hard to tell if your receiver is in the open or not. Every once in a while, and we're not sure if this is a bug or not, the QB would just throw the ball out of bounds, no matter which receiver you'd selected. Minor? Yes, but damned irritating when it's 3rd and long.

After balancing the pluses with the minuses, we came to the conclusion that *NCAA Football 2001* is worthy of a place in your sports game library, but only if you've got a high tolerance for annoying things. It offers a healthy challenge, provides plenty of thrills, but does tend to grate on your nerves every once in a while.

◀ With Advanced Player Control, you can play as the wide receiver, run whatever pattern you want, and then call for the QB to throw you the ball...

▶ ...of course, if you suck as a wide receiver, the results are inevitable.



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Two Adventures

He transforms into monsters

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She uses powerful magic spells

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PlayStation

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EVERYONE

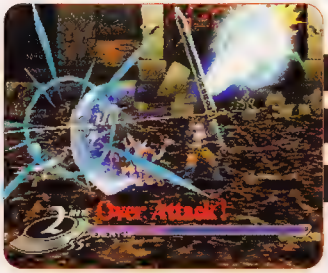
E

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Animated Violence

Mild Language

Valkyrie Profile



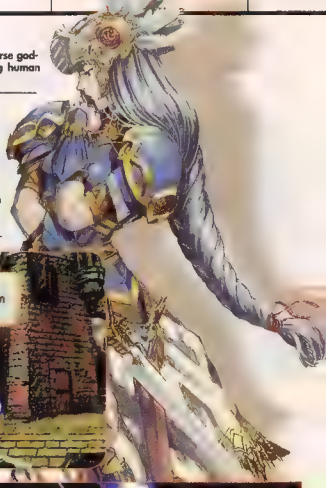
PUBLISHER
Enix

DEVELOPER
Tri-Ace

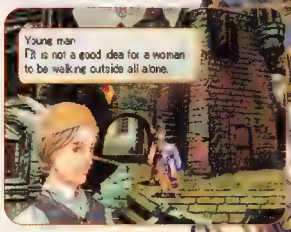
GENRE
RPG

The combo-based combat system is one of the high points of *Valkyrie Profile*, delivering a fighting game like rush and plenty of strategy.

You control Lenneth Valkyrie, a Norse goddess of war, charged with recruiting human souls to do battle in Asgard for Odin.



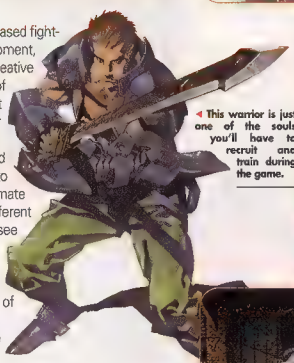
The game's scenery, especially in towns, is often stunning, even though it's purely 2D. There's absolutely loads of parallax scrolling.



ENIX DELIVERS AN RPG THAT'S ANYTHING BUT CLICHÉ

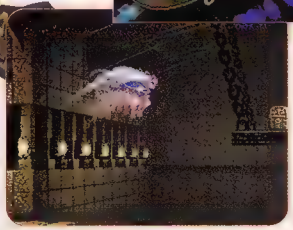
Mixing side-scrolling platform action, combo-based fighting, and god sim-like character development, *Valkyrie Profile* is quite easily the most atypical and creative RPG ever released on PlayStation. Of course, all of the creativity in the world doesn't make for a great game, but thankfully all of the pieces come together just right to make this adventure one for the ages.

The main gist of the game lies in recruiting and training human souls so that they may be sent to Asgard, home of the Norse gods, to fight in the ultimate battle between good and evil. Since you have different souls to train throughout the adventure, you get to see the story surrounding their lives, which makes for a very refreshing change from traditionally linear RPG plot lines. It also means that there's a lot more strategy involved in managing the stats and inventories of your party members



This warrior is just one of the souls you'll have to recruit and train during the game.

The game's method of exploration is also quite refreshing. Instead of tedious overhead dungeon crawling, you control the valkyrie in side-scrolling stages akin to those in *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*. There's plenty of platform-style gameplay to be had, and it's actually better playing than most dedicated action-platformers. More *Street Fighter* than *Final Fantasy*, the combat system is a real standout, and focuses on mastering attack combos. Since you can send your party members to attack in any order you wish, and without any delay in between, the experience can generate quite a rush, and a lot of satisfaction when you know you've landed your combo just right.



As if the combat wasn't exhilarating enough, you can execute massive Purify moves in order to knock precious items out of your enemies.

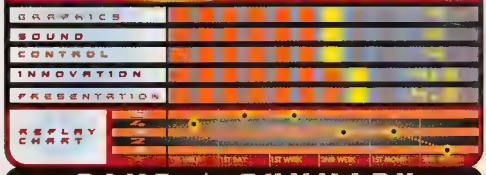
The exploration segments play out like a classic side-scrolling platformer, with plenty of precision jumping and even a cool weapon/climbing mechanic based on shooting ice crystals.

The game also earns high marks when it comes to graphics and sound. The towns, exploration stages, and characters boast gorgeous details, both pre-rendered and hand-drawn, while the musical score is suitably stirring and matches the game's epic vistas perfectly.

It's not without some hiccups, such as the fact that your weapons (which are made, rather than purchased) can break easily and your exploration can sometimes be stifled by the time limit placed on the game's chapters, but *Valkyrie Profile* proves to be a superb experience overall. Even if you've only played the more "mainstream" RPGs the PlayStation has to offer, the game is good enough to warrant a look – chances are you'll be glad you did.

With so many towns to visit, you'll be tempted to explore. Unfortunately, your time per chapter is somewhat limited, so you have to keep your curiosity to a minimum if you want the good ending.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN



GAME ★ SUMMARY

PSM FINAL SCORE:

A UNIQUE ADVENTURE THAT'S WELL WORTH TAKING

Mortal Kombat: Special Forces

PUBLISHER: Midway
DEVELOPER: Midway
STYLE OF GAME: Action/Adventure

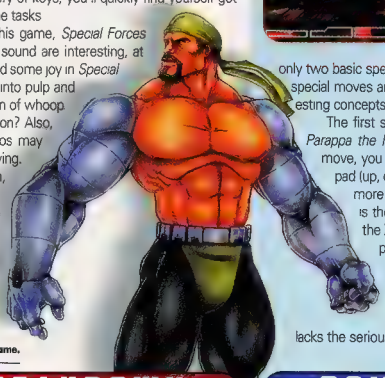
This is one of the many disgusting ways to finish off your opponent. This guy blowed up real good...

MORTAL KOMBAT IS DEAD!

This game is plagued with serious problems that make playing a chore, rather than an enjoyable experience. First, the huge levels are empty, and contain tons of rooms that seem to contribute nothing to the game. It is curious to unlock or find a secret room with nothing in it.

Second, the enemy AI is just plain cheap. On many occasions, you'll turn a corner and get bombarded by invisible fire. Once you spot the enemy, you'll have to take four or five hits in order to reach and destroy the nuisance. Even if you have a gun, it is imprudent to waste any ammunition on anything except bosses, since the bosses are pretty cheap, too. Finally, the puzzles in this game are trite and annoying. Since they often involve only the discovery of keys, you'll quickly find yourself getting frustrated with the tediousness of the tasks

Despite the first-generation feel to this game, *Special Forces* isn't a complete loss. The graphics and sound are interesting, at least in a *MK* sort of way; you just may find some joy in *Special Forces* when Jax smashes his enemies into pulp and taunts, "Would you like fries with that can of whoop a$$?" — Midway's own tasty combination? Also, the ability to learn decent-looking combos may also entice a few gamers to continue playing. However, unless you're like Chibi-Chan, who must master every combo in a game, the difficulty of executing the more elaborate ones will ultimately turn off most players. Perhaps if Midway concentrated on refining this aspect of the game most (and the broken story a little, too), the fighting interface could have been *MKSF*'s saving grace!



Too bad Jax doesn't look this imposing in the game.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN

GRAPHICS
SOUND
CONTROL
INNOVATION
PRESENTATION
REPLAY CHART

GAME ★ SUMMARY

- Decent Graphics And Sound
- Mildly Interesting Combo System
- Boring Puzzles
- Cheap Enemies
- Broken Story

PSM FINAL SCORE:
PERFORM A FATALITY ON THIS DISK!

X-Men: Mutant Academy

ALL MUTANTS MUST DIE!

Activision's *Mutant Academy* isn't a horrible game, for it is definitely playable. However, it doesn't exceed in any one area: the graphics and animation are stiff and bland, the control is mediocre, the moves are limited, and combos are nearly absent.

The only area that this game does shine is in its *X-Men* theme. Many *X-Men* favorites are included, such as Wolverine, Beast, Sabertooth, Magneto, etc. Although we would recommend this game only for fans of the comics, even purists may be disappointed. For example, the Wolverine's newer yellow and brown suit isn't the redesigned one from the comics, but his original suit with brown replacing the blue markings. Also, since when does Mystique fight, let alone knock Wolverine off his rocker?

In terms of gameplay, *Mutant Academy* initially seems promising, but falls way short of anything entertaining after only thirty minutes of play. Each character has

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Paradox
STYLE OF GAME: Fighting

Pulling off supers may look cool and exciting, but connecting them into a long combo may take a bit of practice.

only two basic special moves and three different types of supers. Although the special moves are especially nothing special, the supers throw in some interesting concepts to the genre.

The first super bar is a standard super, but the second super bar is a *Parappa the Rappa*-like super move. As soon as you perform this super move, you have about three seconds to input a series moves on the D-pad (up, down, left and right), the more you successfully complete, the more energy your opponent will lose. The third super is retarded. It is the X-super. As soon as this meter is full, you must rapidly tap the X button to activate the super. This five seconds of button tapping leaves you open to attacks from your opponent, and trust us, with the cheap computer AI, you will be attacked. Although this last super is an attempt at an original idea, actually executing it is impractical.

Overall, *Mutant Academy* is at best an average fighter that lacks the seriousness and technique of Capcom's *X-Men* games.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN

GRAPHICS
SOUND
CONTROL
INNOVATION
PRESENTATION
REPLAY CHART

GAME ★ SUMMARY

- Some Favorite X-Men Characters Included
- Unlike *Parappa*-Like Super Move
- Stiff Control
- Bland Graphics
- Limited Set Of Moves
- No Real Combo System

PSM FINAL SCORE:
EVEN X-MEN FANS SHOULD JUST GIVE THIS ONE A RENT

JEREMY McGRATH SUPERCROSS™ 2000

AVAILABLE JULY 20TH on Sega Dreamcast™ and the PlayStation® game console

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THE OFFSPRING

Feel it.

The only game with 11-time Supercross Champ Jeremy McGrath

2-player gameplay mode for intense competition!

8 Supercross stadiums and 8 licensed Motocross tracks

Race as or against McGrath, Windham, Dowd or 5 other superstar riders

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EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

Sega Dreamcast.

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

NPG

McGRATH

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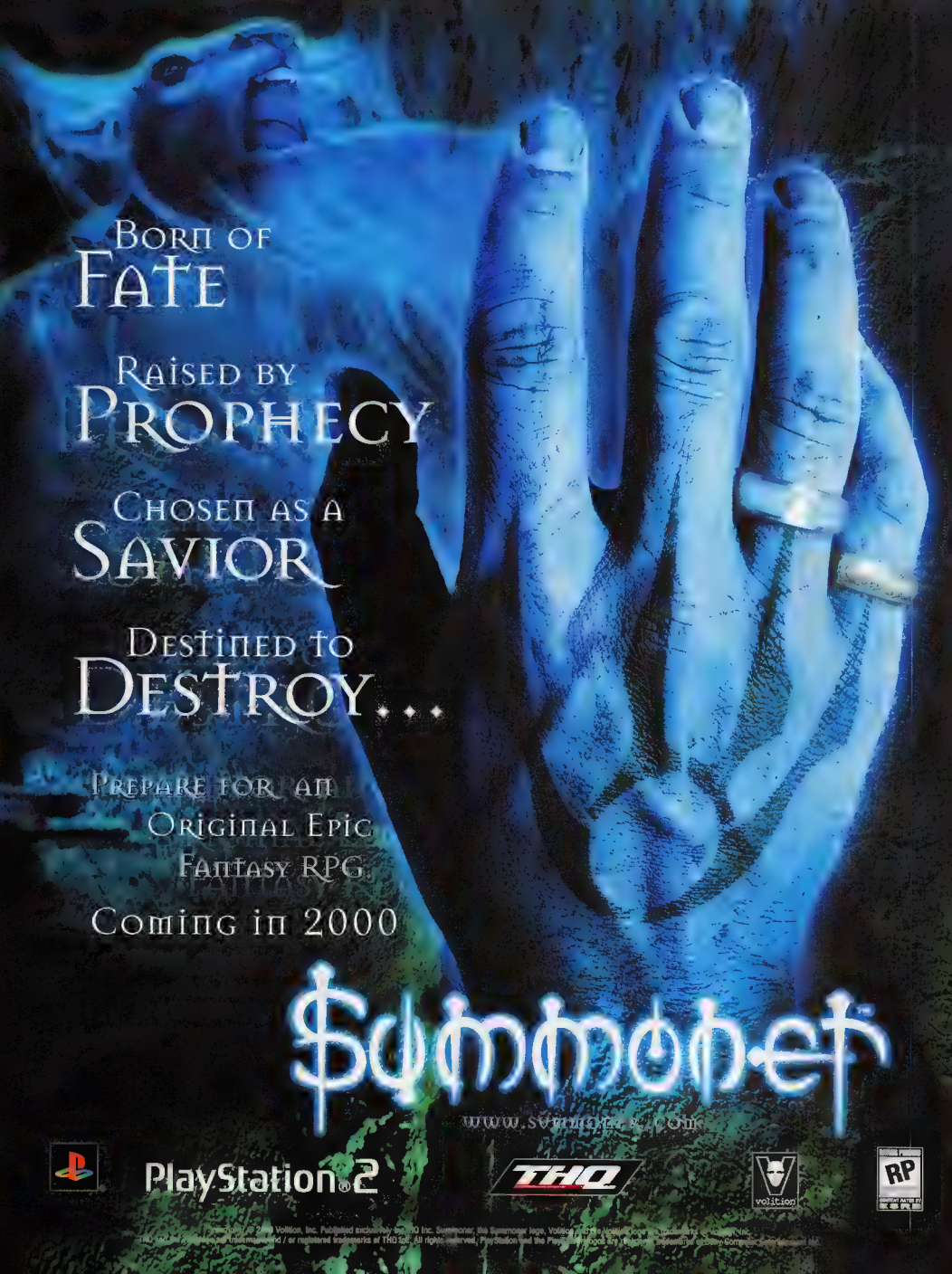
Born of
Fate
Raised by
Prophecy
Chosen as a
Savior
Destined to
Destroy...
Prepare for an
Original Epic
Fantasy RPG
Coming in 2000
Summoner
www.summoner.com
PlayStation 2
THQ
volition
RP

NFL GameDay 2001

PUBLISHER
989 Sports

DEVELOPER
Red Zone Interactive

TYPE OF GAME
Football

You'll be able to check out player pics after a successful play. Way to go, Napoleon!

IT'S TIME FOR A NEW STADIUM...

Just last month, we took our first look at *NFL GameDay 2001*, 989 Sports' latest version of the perennial gridiron classic, and at that time, we wondered if this would be the last version to grace the original PlayStation. Now we've received a review copy, and played it a whole bunch of times, and we still don't know if this is the last PlayStation version. However, we can truthfully say that we don't believe there's much more anyone, let alone 989, can do to improve this game further. It's time to move over to PS2.

GameDay 2001 has evolved from its simple beginnings back in 1995. What were once sprites are now realistic polygon players, scaled to their actual heights and weights. Clumsy collisions have been replaced with new motion captured tackles of all varieties. An easy to confuse AI has evolved into a lean, mean football machine, demanding your best efforts to defeat. And, for the first time ever in a *GameDay*, you can now play as any receiver or running back you want.

Nothing that evolves does so perfectly, and *GameDay 2001* is no exception. Graphically, the stadiums tend to vibrate and pop a bit, kinda like 3Comm during an earthquake. The play selection screens could still be a bit more detailed. While the players have been scaled to size and weight, they sometimes seem to glide over the field rather than run on it.

All of these are minor complaints, though. The game still handles very well and is one hell of a good time. 989 brought in enough NFL stars to to field an All Star team in the making of this game. The playbooks were designed by 55 NFL veterans; guys like Jerome Bettis, Terrell Davis and Mike Alstott, while the motion capturing was performed by some of today's hottest stars, like Charles Woodson and Tim Brown (ahem... both Raiders. .)

So, no, we're not damning *NFL GameDay 2001* with faint praise; not at all. It's just that this game has evolved as far as it can on this particular PlayStation. Will you want it for your library? You should. It's a very good game. Will you want another version on the original PlayStation next year? It's not likely. It's time to build a new stadium.

"He's dead, Jim." New motion captures and real-time scaling of all of the different tackles occurring during the game.

It always did take two Steelers to bring down a Raider.

Slash brings the Steelers up to the line of scrimmage.

The Instant Replay feature, complete with telestrator, makes it easy to see why a play worked. You won't need to wave a red flag or phone the referee to see it, either.

TYSON

Fight Mike, or as Mike!
Take on the champ and a ton of bad-ass opponents on your way to the title shot. Or, be Tyson, and feel what it's like to knock the world senseless.

It's real! It's fierce!
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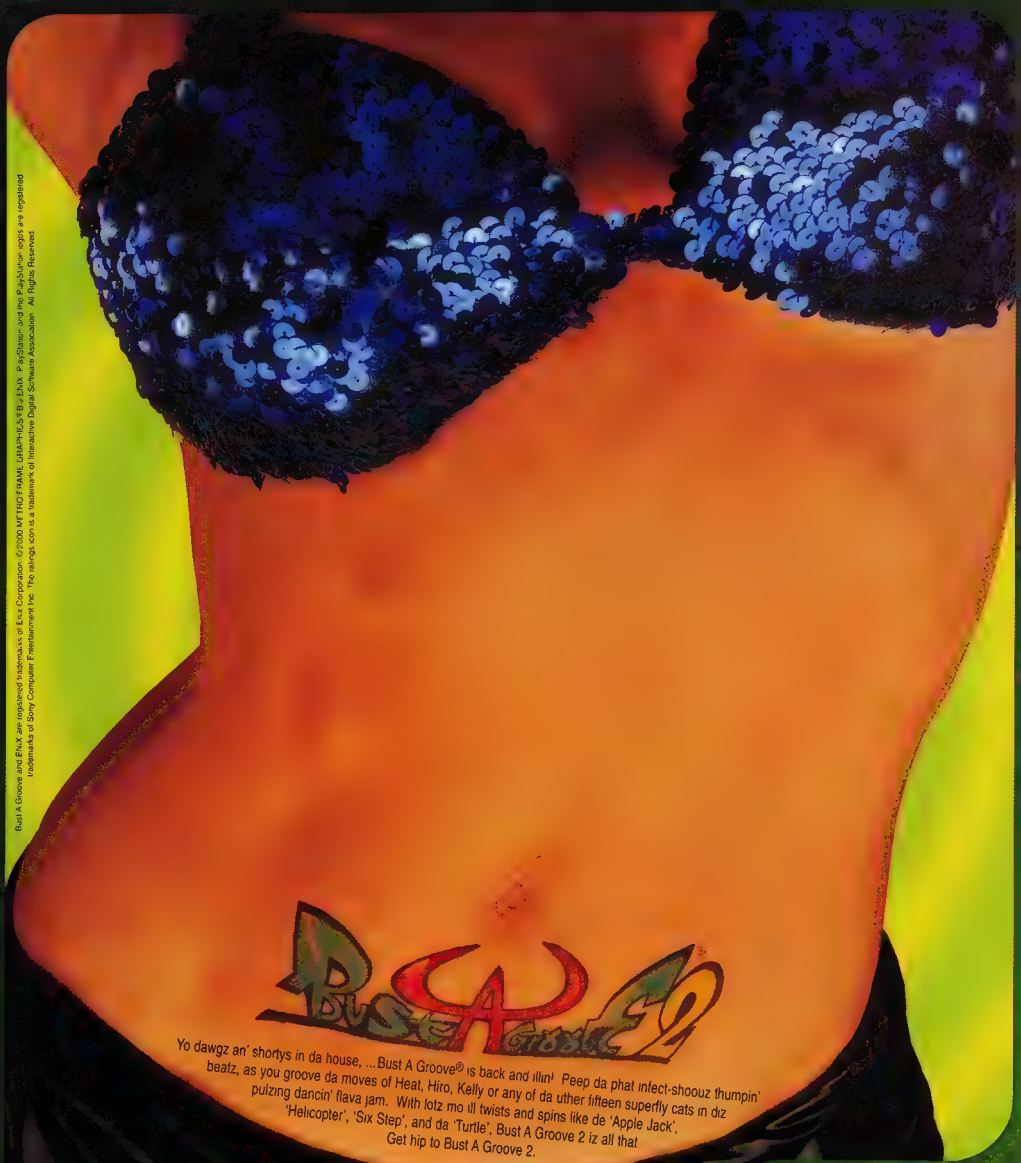

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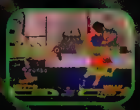

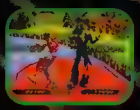

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THE PLAYSTATION2 AT WAR: WILL SONY WIN AGAIN?

Illustration: Michael Golden

On September 9, 1995, a well-known consumer electronics company released its first videogame console upon the U.S. market. The company's name was Sony and the console was, obviously, the PlayStation. Thanks to brilliant marketing, good timing and strong third-party support, the PlayStation grew to become the single most successful console of all time. Currently over 70 million units have been shipped all over the world.

Now, five years later, Sony readies itself for the U.S. launch of the PlayStation2, the 128-bit successor to the little gray box we've all grown to love. And with it, the company is hoping, once again, to take the top spot in this next generation of consoles. However, unlike in this previous generation, Sony won't have it so easy. Sega has already established itself well in the U.S. with the Dreamcast, Nintendo is preparing a console that's about as powerful as the PS2, and probably cheaper as well. And then there's Microsoft, which has dreams of becoming the new Sony. Needless to say, the upcoming war isn't going to be pretty and there are bound to be several casualties. Who's left standing at the end remains to be seen. Our money's on Sony and the PS2, though.

In this feature, we've broken down and analyzed virtually every aspect of the Sony's future plans for the PS2 and what it's doing to win the next generation console war. From the design of the hardware to the broadband network and third-party support, we point out the strengths and weaknesses in Sony's line of defense. Not only that, but we also look at and rate how Sony is doing in comparison to its opposition. In the end, we provide you with our own conclusions, but that shouldn't stop you from coming up with your own.

Is Sony going to completely dominate or is another company going to step in and steal away the spotlight? What can Sony do to ensure its victory? Read the feature, think about it, and then send your opinions our way at psm@imaginemedia.com. Just remember to put "PS2 Feature" in the subject line. We'll run the best responses in a future issue of PSM.

Now, let's head to the front lines and see what Sony's up to...

The Hardware: Sony's Weapon

When Sony released the first specs for its next generation console, most people were blown away. No one expected that the PlayStation2 would be so powerful. It appeared to be an unstoppable force that no company, whether it be Sega, Nintendo or Microsoft, could ever hope to overcome. However, over time, the limitations of the console revealed themselves. Developers became vocal about some of their frustrations with the hardware. Did Sony make some major mistakes when developing the PS2? There is that chance. In this section, we break down the strengths and weaknesses of the console and discuss what Sony is doing to make life easier for developers.

THE STRENGTHS

Polygonal Horsepower

Far and above anything else, the PS2's strongest aspect is its ability to render an extremely large number of polygons on-screen at any given time. Already, some developers have stated that their current game engines push in the upwards of 10-20 million polygons per second and that we can expect that number to be much larger with future titles. When you consider the fact that the current PlayStation can only push around 360,000 polys per second, one can begin to see the potential and power in Sony's new console. This "polygonal horsepower", as the developers of *Munch's Oddysee* like to describe it, will allow for much larger worlds and greater detailed characters than have been seen on past consoles or PCs.

DVD Support

Including DVD support was a brilliant move on Sony's part. It not only helps to justify the higher retail cost of the PS2, but also ensures that the console will become the centerpiece of the living room. When you're not in the mood to play games, you can pop in that copy of *The Matrix* and enjoy the adventures of Neo and Morpheus. Of course, the PS2's ability to support DVDs doesn't just mean that it can play movies. Thanks to the additional storage space available on a DVD, developers can use a greater number of higher resolution textures in their games. This would allow for larger and more detailed environments for players to explore. Also, games that would normally fill up multiple CDs, like a *Final Fantasy* game, can now be released on a single DVD.

Expansion Ports

As Kaz Hurai, the President of SCEA, elegantly put it at this past E3 show, "The PlayStation2 is not the future of videogames. It is the future of entertainment." With that focus in mind, Sony designed the PlayStation2 to be able to grow beyond being a typical console. The inclusion of several connectivity ports (two USB and one i.Link) will allow the PS2 to connect to a myriad of components and peripherals, ranging from keyboards to digital cameras. Imagine being able to download a photo into the PS2 and editing it with a keyboard and a mouse. Then, you could email that edited picture to all of your friends. That's just one of the many possible scenarios that Sony imagines happening in the near future.

Hidden Potential

With the design of the PS2, Sony has gone in an entirely different direction than Sega, Nintendo or Microsoft has. Not only did the company basically create the entire console from scratch, using an innovative CPU and graphics processor (that it helped to develop), but it also designed the console to be very open in its architecture. This openness allows developers to come up with their own way of doing things. There is no one "right way" to do something on the PS2, which means developers will constantly be discovering new and better ways to get the most out of the console. Stuart Denman, the Technical Director for Surreal Software, feels that the open design of the console "will allow the PS2 to have more long-term potential. Games in three years will be leaps and bounds beyond today's games." Ken Levine, of Irrational Games, echoes those statements with his own, "The interesting thing about the design of the PS2 is that you'll see the games get better and better and better through the life of the console. This is because developers will always be learning new tricks. There's a lot of secrets tucked away in there."

Backwards Compatibility

The only console in recent history to include backwards compatibility, the PlayStation2 will allow you to play all those PlayStation games you currently own. Not only that, but it will speed up loading times and improve the look of most of those games. Sony will also release updates to the PS2 PlayStation drivers so that games can be further enhanced in different ways, such as increased resolution.

If only the wonderous "PlayStation2 Plane" would fly over our neighborhood... *(sigh...)*

THE WEAKNESSES

Anti-aliasing Difficulties

On the day of the Japanese launch, however, the first dent in the PS2's armor was discovered. Not only were the first games not visually far and beyond the current crop of Dreamcast games, some of them actually looked slightly worse. This was mainly due to the lack of anti-aliasing (a technique used to blur the edges of polygons), which caused the games to look very rough and jaggy. Since Dreamcast titles didn't really suffer from this problem, a lot of gamers and journalists started to doubt the abilities of the PS2. Did Sony forget to include a feature that both the N64 and Dreamcast had and that the Dolphin and X-Box will have? Fortunately, the answer to that question is "no". The PlayStation2 does have that feature and developers are able to implement it in several different ways. The main reason that the early Japanese titles and some American ones didn't have anti-aliasing (AA) is because, quite simply, the developers didn't know how to do it properly. Only recently has Sony made info available to developers that allow them to implement AA in a more efficient manner. Still, including true AA tends to put a bit of a burden on the PS2, which means that corners have to be cut elsewhere, at least until developers become more familiar with the hardware. For some games, the drop from 60fps to 30 is the way to go, for others; a reduction in texture resolution is a necessity. There are ways to give the illusion of AA, without having to take cuts in performance, and some developers taking advantage of them. However, until Sony comes up with specific and easy ways to implement true AA that don't take major hits on performance, you probably won't be seeing a huge number of games take advantage of it.

Limited Video Memory

If you talk to any developer and ask them what single aspect they would have wanted improved on the PlayStation2, they would probably say, "Increase the amount of VRAM." Since its release, the PS2 has gotten a lot of negative criticism from developers because of the limited amount of video ram (VRAM) that's embedded on the Graphics Synthesizer (GS). Since it's so small (4MBs), games must be designed in a way that's very different from other consoles. A lot of time must be spent in coming up with the best ways to stream data and textures from the main system memory into the VRAM because it isn't large enough to hold anything for long periods of time. Consoles like the Dreamcast have larger amounts of dedicated texture memory (8MBs), so there's no need to worry about streaming anything. What's most frustrating to developers is that the PS2's VRAM limitations really seem to hamper the potential of the console. Famed *Metal Gear Solid* creator, Hideo Kojima, even went on record saying that the full potential of the PlayStation2 would never be reached because of the limited size of the VRAM. Only time will tell if he's right or not.

Difficult To Program For

While most developers welcome the openness of the PS2's design, it can cause some serious problems. There are just so many different ways to do everything, and it can get a bit overwhelming rather quickly. Having to worry about the limited VRAM (see above) wouldn't be that big of a deal if it was the only major challenge

that developers had to deal with, but it's not. There's also the matter of two little things called Vector Units. You see, the Emotion Engine, which is the main CPU of the PS2, is split up into three main sections that can be used to process separate parts of a game engine interdependently; physics, lighting, weather effects, etc. However, getting all these parts to work together smoothly and optimally is quite difficult and generally gives developers their fair share of headaches. Some developers, like those at *Oddworld*, have been very vocal with their frustrations, stating that there have been "...basic oversights that failed to be addressed at the hardware design level. [The PS2] is a frustrating system to develop for." While the views of the *Oddworld* developers certainly don't reflect those of the majority, it does make you question Sony's hardware design.

Lack of four controller slots

While not as major as the other weaknesses we've listed, the lack of four controller ports did come as quite a surprise for many developers and gamers. When you consider that all of the consoles in this next generation have four ports, it's strange that Sony only included two. Sony doesn't feel that it's a major problem and suggests that gamers who want to play four-player games should just go out and buy a multitap. That's not the point, though. We all know how badly the PlayStation multitap was supported. Why would that change with the PS2? It's been proven that developers don't like to support console add-ons (see Sega CD, 32x) because only a small portion of the market ever has them. That's why you never really saw a lot of four-player games on the PS, aside from sports titles. Sony should have just included the two additional ports and made everyone that much happier.

THE BOTTOM LINE

As with any new console, the PlayStation2 introduces its fair share of problems to developers. However, most are willing to take the time in order to get the most out of the system. Still, the problems with the hardware, such as limited anti-aliasing abilities and the small amount of VRAM, are very real and can't be denied. Now, the severity of these problems has yet to be determined. For every developer who's complaining about the hardware, there're several that are praising it. It just boils down to the willingness of the particular developer and the financial and physical resources they have at their disposal. For the most part, though, companies are developing their own solutions and workarounds for these problems. It doesn't appear to be a big deal. And Sony's R&D division is constantly creating new tools and software libraries in order to make life easier for the developers, as well. If a majority of these hardware difficulties can be nipped in the bud early on, then there's no reason why companies won't stick with Sony. However, if we get into the new year, and a lot of these difficulties continue, then Sony may start to see developers jumping ship in favor of easier consoles, i.e. the Dolphin and X-Box. And that would not be good for PS2 owners.

SCORE: ★★★★☆

MASTERING THE HARDWARE

All new consoles have a learning curve to them, and it takes several years before developers can come to grips with the hardware and push it to its max. The same will hold true of the PlayStation2, only you'll see greater leaps (visually and gameplay-wise) between generations of games then you have with the current PlayStation.

Remember the vast improvement that *R4* was over the first *Ridge Racer*? Well, just imagine what the final *Ridge Racer* title on PS2 will look like, when *RRV* already looks this amazing.

THE COMPETITION

Sega's Dreamcast

Thanks to its simplistic hardware design and PC-style architecture, the Dreamcast has been a developer's dream to develop for. It's very easy to get the most out of the console, which is why some DC games look just as good (and sometimes better) then the first generation of PS2 titles. However, this will a most certainly change in the coming year. It seems that the power of the console has nearly already been maxed out with such titles as *Shenmue* and *Resident Evil: Code: Veronica*. Most developers feel that they can still squeeze a bit more out of the system, but that they won't get a chance to because their focus has now shifted to PlayStation2

SCORE: ★★★☆☆

Nintendo's Dolphin

Little is known about the Dolphin except for that fact that it should be at least as powerful as the PlayStation2. There's also a possibility that the Dolphin will have a greater amount of dedicated texture memory, allowing it to display a larger number of higher quality textures at a time. Its design will be more straightforward and resemble the Dreamcast in a lot of ways, which should make developing for it a lot easier than the N64. Knowing Nintendo, however, there's bound to be some problem with the console. There always is. The ability to connect it with the upcoming GameBoy Advance is a plus, and will help the console compete with the PS2's expandability.

SCORE: ★★★★☆

Microsoft's X-Box

Hardware-wise, the X-Box looks to surpass every other console out there. In a lot of ways it resembles a PC, but with more power at a much lower price. Its unified memory design allows developers to give memory to what needs it most, which is in direct contrast to the other consoles that all have dedicated amounts of texture memory or cache available to them. Also, the X-Box will have a built-in hard drive, whereas the PS2's will be separate. Developers will be more likely to take advantage of the X-Box's drive because everyone will have one. The X-Box will be the simplest to develop for and should have the most available power.

SCORE: ★★★★★

THE SOFTWARE: SONY'S AMMUNITION

Regardless of how powerful a piece of hardware is, it can't so anything without a steady stream of good software to go along with it. Software is what causes a console to sell like hotcakes or stay on the store shelf and collect dust. The current generation of consoles is a perfect example of this. With little quality support from third-party companies, both Sega and Nintendo lost out to the PlayStation. If you wanted to play the latest *Final Fantasy*, *Resident Evil* or *NFL GameDay*, there was one console you had to have. And that's why Sony has shipped more than 70 million PlayStations throughout the world.

In this next generation of consoles, software will once again dictate what consoles gamers will buy. Sony is well aware of this and is going out of its way to entice developers to support the PlayStation2. It seems to be working, because virtually every major company has signed on to do at least one title. Most, however, have at least 3-4 in the works

Since the releases of Nintendo's and Microsoft's consoles are still a way off, PlayStation2 has become the main focus for a lot of companies. A lot of these companies will continue to support the Dreamcast for the rest of this year, but after that, many we talked to are taking a wait-and-see attitude

To give you a better idea of the amazing amount of third-party commitment that the PS2 has, we've broken it down into short term and long term support. Take a look and see why it's going to be difficult to knock Sony's 128-bit console out of the #1 position

▶ Short Term (First Six Months)

Despite having a very lackluster Japanese launch lineup, which consoles always tend to have, the PS2 is looking strong for its U.S. debut. All of the big companies, ranging from Electronic Arts to Capcom, will have titles ready for the October 26th launch day. And unlike overseas, there will be at least one game from each genre. Titles like *Madden 2001*, *Tekken Tag Tournament*, *Ridge Racer* and *SSX* will do a lot to sell systems, and that's just on the first day. Sony promises over 50 titles will be released by December 31st, and that another 50 will be ready by the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 2001. And if that isn't amazing short term support, we certainly don't know what is. The only downside is that no major titles, like *Resident Evil IV* or *Metal Gear Solid*, will be available in the near future. You'll have to wait at least a year for them

POTENTIAL: ★★★★☆

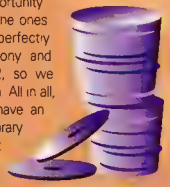
▶ Long Term (First Two Years)

As far as long term developer support goes, Sony probably couldn't paint a brighter picture if it wanted to. In all, there are around 390 titles in production right now, but that's only in Japan. If you take into account U.S. and European companies, the number jumps up to nearly 450, most of which will be released within the console's first two years of existence. That's just staggering. No previous console has had even close to the same level of commitment from the development community. That just goes to show you the amount of faith that companies have in Sony. Also, just as the PS2 starts to reach a larger number of casual gamers (around Fall 2001), many of the more anticipated titles will be available. You'll be able to play *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Final Fantasy X*, and possibly *Resident Evil IV*. By far, the PS2 has the greatest potential game-wise, than any other console before it and gamers are going to want to own one because of that single fact.

POTENTIAL: ★★★★★

THE BOTTOM LINE

There are still a lot of unknowns in this new generation of consoles, but we have to put our money with Sony. There's already been a large outpouring of support for the PS2 and we highly doubt that any of the two upcoming consoles or the Dreamcast will ever see this level of third party commitment. That's not to say that companies wouldn't jump ship if they saw a better opportunity. However, almost all of the ones we surveyed were perfectly happy working with Sony and developing for the PS2, so we doubt that would happen. All in all, the PS2 is looking to have an even better software library than the current PlayStation, and that's saying an awful lot.



THE COMPETITION

Sega's Dreamcast

The Dreamcast has an amazing library of games, but third-party support for the console will dwindle towards the end of the year. That is, unless Dreamcast sales climb this Holiday season. Sega is one of the premiere software companies, and will support the DC until the very end. That, at least, ensures that DC owners will have a chance to play more AAA titles over the coming year

SHORT: ★★★★☆ / **LONG:** ★★☆☆☆

Nintendo's Dolphin

The Dolphin will launch with a *Mario* game, followed up with several AAA first and second-party titles. *Pokemon* will also be present. Third-party will probably be slow at first, but then pick up as time goes on. Most developers will be cautious, however, as it's always been hard to make a profit after Nintendo's licensing fees

SHORT: ★★★★☆ / **LONG:** TBD

Microsoft's X-Box

Microsoft is the true wildcard because we don't know how much support they will really have. Several of the developers we talked to have plans to port over certain PC or PS2 titles to X-Box, but very few are developing original content. Microsoft better have a strong first and second-party system in place to secure a constant stream of quality titles released over the first two years.

SHORT: ★★★☆☆ / **LONG:** TBD

THE A-TEAM: PLAYSTATION2'S BEST ALLIES

When Nintendo first announced its 64-bit console in 1995, it came up with a list of select companies that were signed on to do games. This list contained the so-called "A-team" that would help Nintendo achieve the number one position in the videogame wars. Well, despite the number and quality of developers on that list, it can't even begin to compare to the A-Team that Sony has on its side. Here are eight of the many companies that plan to support the PS2 in a big way.

Company: Electronic Arts
In the Works: *Madden 2001*, *The World is Not Enough*, *SSX*, *X Squad*

By far the company most supportive of the PS2, EA has around 30 titles currently in development. This includes its popular sports franchises, several action games, and several of its hit PC titles. Of all the companies on this list, EA will have the most games ready for launch

Company: Namco
In the Works: *Ridge Racer V*, *Tekken Tag Tournament*, *Moto GP*

While not as vocal with its PS2 plans, Namco has several projects in the works for the console. Obviously, *RRV* and *Tekken* will be launch games, but not much is known about *Moto GP*. As with the current PlayStation, we expect Namco to continue support for the PS2 by releasing 3-4 quality titles a year.

Company: Capcom
In the Works: *Street Fighter EX3*, *Resident Evil IV*, *Onimusha*, *Dino Crisis 3*

Capcom has been very supportive of the Dreamcast, thus far, but we predict that its focus will move back over to the PS2 next year. Gamers can expect all the popular franchises that appeared on the PS to appear on the PS2. The only uncertainty is if Capcom will be bringing their 2D titles over, as well.

Company: Midway
In the Works: *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*, *Spy Hunter*, *Legion*, *NFL Blitz*

Supporting pretty much every viable console, Midway also has several games in the queue for the PlayStation2. Most of the games will be ports of the company's existing arcade titles, but a few will be original and exclusive to Sony's console. The only launch title, however, will be *Gauntlet: Dark Legacy*.

Company: Konami
In the Works: *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Z.O.E.*, *Silent Hill 2*, *Silent Scope*, *ESPN Int. Track & Field*

Metal Gear Solid 2. Need we say more? Konami was single-handedly responsible for the most impressive game on the PS. Now, it looks to do the same with the PS2. Not only that, but the company's other PS2 titles also look amazing and should do a lot to sell systems. We bow before this company's ability.

Company: Acclaim
In the Works: *All-Star Baseball 2002*, *Shadowman 2*, *Ferrari 360*, *SRC*

Acclaim has big plans for the PS2. With around ten titles in development, the company has something for pretty much every gamer. Acclaim's biggest trump card, however, would have to be the Ferrari license, which gives it the exclusive rights to publish titles based on the Italian car brand.

Company: Squaresoft
In the Works: *The Bouncer*, *Driving Emotion Type-S*, *FFX*, *FFXI*

If you look at the history of videogames, the console that has had the support of Square tends to come out on top. Will that also be the case with the PlayStation2? Well, with games like the *Bouncer* and the next two *Final Fantasy* titles coming out over the next year or so, the chances look pretty good.

Company: Eidos
In the Works: *Tomb Raider PS2*, *LOK: Soul Reaver 2*, *Blood Omen 2*

At last count, Eidos had around eight games currently under works, the most obvious of which happens to be a new, PS2 exclusive version of *Tomb Raider*. One of the lesser known titles, *Herdy Gerdy*, was originally going to be released on the Dreamcast, but is now jumping ship over to Sony's console.

THE GAMES THAT WILL LAUNCH THE SYSTEM

Sony has not revealed the official lineup for the PlayStation2 launch yet, but it looks like there's going to be somewhere between 20 and 30 titles available. Of those, these are the ones that are likely to garner the most interest and get gamers to plunk down their money.

Madden NFL 2001

When the Dreamcast launched, *NFL 2K* was its best-selling title. We expect the same for PS2's *Madden*.

THE COMPANIES: SONY'S ARMY

When it comes to the console wars, a company brand name is of greatest importance. Just look at how Nintendo built its videogame mascots into characters that are, by recent tests, better known than even Disney's characters.

A company's name can either give it a head start against the competition, or become a handicap from day one. Let's see how the big players match up in terms of company reputation in three areas that really matter: developers, hardcore gamers, and casual gamers.

PLAYSTATION2

Developers

When Sony first launched the PlayStation, it made an unprecedented effort to woo new developers. Before that time, game makers had been forced to pay huge licensing fees to produced expensive game cartridges. Sony offered the low cost alternative of PlayStation CDs. Developers who made games for the PlayStation enjoyed bigger profits than ever before.

Sony also gave developers plenty of help in making their games. This resulted in a flood of companies abandoning both the Sega Saturn and the Nintendo 64 to create games for the PlayStation.

When Sony introduced the PlayStation2, it had an extremely tough contender: its own reputation. However, Sony stepped up to the plate and offered developers even cheaper production costs, and set up shop to help developers with their first PS2 games.

While some developers have complained about the complexity of the PS2, the overwhelming mood in the development community is support for Sony's console. This is readily apparent in the sheer number of games in development for the PS2. Very few, if any developers are using the traditional 'wait and see' approach to PS2 development. This is because they've developed a bond of trust in Sony.

SCORE: ★★★★★

Hardcore Gamers

Perhaps because of its relative youth, or perhaps because of Sony's targeting of the mass market, the PlayStation has not received the rabid support of hardcore gamers. Yes, most hardcore gamers own a PlayStation, but they have not embraced the console with as much fervor as Sega or Nintendo's rabid fans.

However, this is rapidly changing. Because of its phenomenal success, the PlayStation is the home of many games that appeal to the hardest of the hardcore. In fact, within a few years, the number of fans that grew up playing PlayStation games will outnumber those raised on Sega and Nintendo. This generation of hardcore gamers will be loyal to the PS2.

As the PlayStation2 launches with game support in all the classic hardcore gaming genres, it will begin to enjoy the support of the hardcore more than the PlayStation ever did.

SCORE: ★★★☆☆

Casual Gamers

Since the launch of the original PlayStation, Sony has made no secrets about its plans to target casual gamers. And looking at the unprecedented installed base of the PlayStation, its plans succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectations.

The PlayStation itself has become a cultural icon, and casual gamers associate it with videogames in general. The PlayStation2 will benefit from the 70 million PlayStation owners, many of whom will gladly purchase the sequel to the game machine they're most familiar with. The PS2's name may not be original, but it may very well be the best decision Sony ever made.

Let's also not forget the Sony brand name. Even if you don't count the millions upon millions of gamers who know the PlayStation name, look at how many people are familiar with the Sony brand. Quality Walkmans, TVs, stereos, computers, and other high-tech devices have been building consumer trust for years. The PS2, will certainly take advantage of that.

SCORE: ★★★★★

THE DEVELOPER'S CHOICE

We polled game developers to see which system they thought would take the top place in the coming console wars. While all of the developers we polled were working on PlayStation2 titles, the majority were publicly mum on revealing their true opinions — that's why we were so surprised by the results. When asked to rank the consoles in terms of potential for success, over half the developer ranked the PS2 at the top. Here's how the voting broke down overall:

* We awarded 10 points for each number-one ranking, 8 points for each number two ranking, 5 for third, and 3 points for last place.

THE COMPETITION

Microsoft's X-Box

Developers

While Japanese and traditional console developers have been less than enthusiastic about X-Box, PC gamer makers have embraced the console wholeheartedly. Because its design environment is very similar to the PC, those game makers feel comfortable porting their games and making new titles.

SCORE: ★★★☆☆

Hardcore Gamers

Hardcore gamers have little or no attachment to Microsoft in terms of gaming. In fact, the association for many is actually negative

SCORE: ★☆☆☆☆

Casual Gamers

Casual gamers are very familiar with Microsoft and may trust the name brand when it comes to purchasing a console. However, Microsoft owns very few mass-market friendly videogame franchises that it can rely on for launch

SCORE: ★★★☆☆

Nintendo's Dolphin

Developers

After years of charging exorbitant fees to developers, Nintendo has built for itself a bad reputation in the development community. Even though the company has promised to lower fees, many developers have already turned to other alternatives. Nintendo's 'Dream Team' developers continue to thrive, however, because of the lack of competition

SCORE: ★★☆☆☆

Hardcore Gamers

Nintendo has perhaps the richest history of any console company in terms of game quality. However, its reputation as a kiddy game console has kept it from appealing to hardcore gamers as they mature

SCORE: ★★★★☆

Casual Gamers

Mario is actually better known than Mickey Mouse, which is a phenomenal testament to the power of Nintendo. However, Nintendo has not made nearly as deep a cultural impact in recent years as it did in the past and that recognition will dwindle with time.

SCORE: ★★★★★

Sega's Dreamcast

Developers

The Dreamcast is home to many wonderful games, however, most of these are from Sega's own development teams. Third party developers have bought into the Dreamcast, however, their support has slowed to a trickle in the wake of the PS2.

SCORE: ★★★☆☆

Hardcore Gamers

Sega enjoys what may be the most rabid brand following of hardcore gamers. Even though the platform does not have as many games as its competition, the hardcore adore the Dreamcast.

SCORE: ★★★★★

Casual Gamers

Unfortunately for Sega, the company has not been able to convert its strong hardcore following over to the casual gamer. This is evident in the low worldwide installed base of the Dreamcast. To succeed, a game platform must reel in both the casual and the hardcore.

SCORE: ★★☆☆☆

DEVELOPER'S THOUGHTS

We asked PlayStation2 developers what they thought about Sony and why they are developing for the PS2. Their responses were almost unanimously supportive of Sony's new system. Following are some of the more interesting and telling answers. It seems that the PS2 has the support of pretty much every developer out there. Why do you think that is?

"Developers will support PS2 because every developer knows that it will be successful. Just look at the software penetration in terms of software to hardware ratios, sales volumes for the top selling titles and Sony's market share, and that translates to a no-brainer kind of decision."

David Perry
Founder, Shiny Ent.

"Five years ago Sony brought the first mass market entertainment console namely PS1. The hardware sold over 26 million units in North America. It also allowed a reasonable quantity of games to sell over 1 million units. Everybody considers SCEA able to break the record with PS2."

Francois Lourdin
Senior Producer, Infogrames

"In one word... Confidence. They have shown that they are aggressive and plan to control the industry. The sales of PlayStation 1 were amazing. They have the complete support of the retailers and the developers at this point. The only risk I see is them underestimating the strength of their enemies."

Mark Burke
Product Development
Crave Entertainment

"At the moment, the PlayStation2 is probably the best machine on the market. Developers are sure to support it. Also, it maintains the same basic elements as the original PlayStation, making it easier to program for."

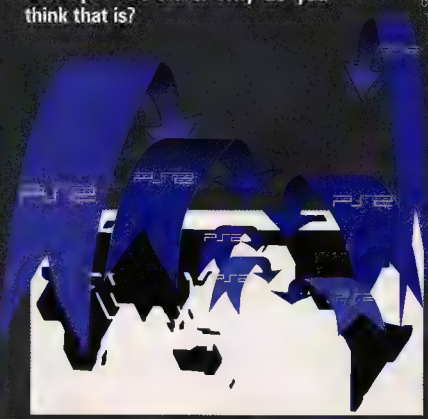
Kodutsumi-san
Director, Kessen
KOEI

"Sony has clearly established a strong reputation with the PlayStation. I think there was a general assumption that they could follow this up with the PlayStation2, and if enough talented developers make this assumption, it then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."

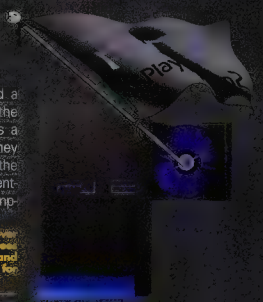
Ken Levine
Creative Director
Irrational Games

"Sony is a great hardware company to work with. Unlike certain other hardware companies, they are kind to third parties and developers. So Developers want Sony to win."

Jason Rubin
Founder, Naughty Dog, Inc.



◀ Sony makes no bones about it — they want to take over the world. Well, at least your living room, anyway. Sony sees more competition for PS2 coming from TV shows, movies and CDs than from other gaming systems — they're in a battle for your free time as much as your money.



The Future: Sony's Battle Plan

One major key to success in the videogame wars is a clear, aggressive battle plan. A look back at past console wars shows us the strategies that guaranteed victory and the ones that insured failure.

Remember how well Sega ambushed Nintendo with aggressive marketing for Genesis and a lineup of killer sports titles? Look at how things shook out in the last generation. Sony conquered with the strong support of developers and casual gamers, Sega turned developers off with the Saturn, and Nintendo was stuck in the past with its cartridge-based N64.

While it's easy to see battle plans in hindsight, it's more difficult to recognize where a company is headed in the present. Let's take a look at what we know about the plans for each game platform...

PLAYSTATION2

Short Term

Sony's short-term plan is essentially a land grab. The company has already made an impact with developers, which is evident in the consoles unbelievable launch support.

Sony is predicting that we may see as many as 100 PS2 games as early as March 2001. The company also plans to ship 10 million PS2 units worldwide by the end of the year. Judging by current sales momentum, Sony will sell every unit it can produce.

The short term plan is to become the established market leader before Nintendo or Microsoft even launch their consoles. If Sony can make itself the lead console right from the start, the others may always seem like secondary consoles. So far the plan looks like it's working well.

Long Term

Sony wants nothing less than total domination of the videogame market, and it has a long term plan to get it. Basically, it's simple: give the three most important sectors of the videogame industry what they want. Developers want a huge installed base, technical support, and a powerful machine to work with. Retailers want big profit margins and games that will sell. Gamers want lots of games at affordable prices. Sony is on track to do all three.

The Competition

Microsoft's X-Box

Short Term

Microsoft's short term goal for the X-Box is to establish the console as a contender in both the minds of gamers and developers, and to find exclusive titles to bolster its growing list of PC ports. The jury is still out on both counts.

Long Term

Microsoft want to build on its success in the PC market and take over the living room as well. This means that Microsoft must establish the X Box not only as a PC game port machine, but also a home for traditional console genres.

Nintendo's Dolphin

Short Term

Nintendo seems disinterested in the short term in its plans for the Dolphin. Right now the company has targeted its focus on the wildly successful Game Boy and its successor, and also the company is trying to squeeze as much as it can get out of the N64. Nintendo and Rare are already working on blockbuster Dolphin launch titles, however.

Long Term

Some feel that Nintendo is content with its current position, and is happy to control a small, but still lucrative section of the videogame market. The company must, however, deliver games that will hold on to the kids that graduated the Nintendo 64. To do this, the company needs to woo back third party developers who've left for more rewarding consoles.

Sega's Dreamcast

Short Term

Sega is desperately struggling to salvage the future of the Dreamcast. Sega has already tried price drops, rebate offers, and everything else under the sun to make the Dreamcast catch on globally. Unfortunately, it isn't working very well.

Long Term

Sega must decide whether it can continue to fight with the big boys in the console market, or instead, pull up shop and become a game maker. A follow up to the Dreamcast is already in development, but Sega will be hard pressed to absorb more losses after so many years of rough water.

THE CONCLUSION

After spending time talking with countless developers and writing this feature, we can only come to one conclusion. This is Sony's war to lose. If the company continues with its plans and delivers what it promises to the gamers, then there should be no reason why the PlayStation2 should fail. Despite its apparent limitations, the hardware still has plenty of untapped power and potential within it. Games will continue to improve, in all aspects, over the next few years and the problems that are present today will soon be distant memories. Also, Sony's proposed broadband network should be up in the next year or so, allowing millions of gamers to communicate and compete against each other online. It truly will be a future to look forward to. Now, what of Sony's competition?

With the strong buzz and support behind the PS2, Sega is going to have a hard time pushing the Dreamcast. Hardcore gamers have already adopted the system, but it's the casual gamers that Sega needs to entice. That's going to be hard considering that third-party support is slowing down. Sega, like Nintendo, will have to rely on its own development teams to keep the console alive. Sadly, it's starting to look like the Saturn all over again. Still, the company's plans to take gaming online are very exciting, and should peak a lot of interest once the network is actually up and running. If it doesn't work out, though, Sega is doomed.

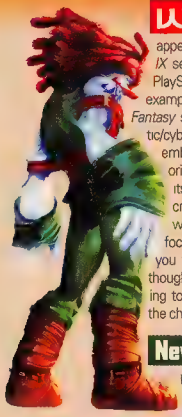
Nintendo will launch the Dolphin to much success, with the help of Mario and Pokemon, but the third party support won't be there in full force. Companies are more eager to develop for the sure thing (PlayStation2) and the more powerful console (X-Box), leaving Nintendo to once again drive sales of it consoles alone. If Dolphin sales do soar, however, then companies may shift a bit of focus from PS2 and X-Box development and release titles for it. Despite this, the Dolphin is looking to end up like the N64 — profitable, but not number one.

X-Box is still a wild card in this whole thing. Microsoft, despite being the new kid on the block, has plenty of clout and a ton of money. It's also managed to design a console that's both powerful and extremely easy to develop for. Practically every PC developer will end up doing something for the system, and several console-exclusive companies have also expressed interest. The one thing working against it, though, is the fact that the X-Box will probably be the last console released. The PlayStation2 will have a good year head start and the Dolphin should have at least a few months. Dreamcast, if it's still around, will have a well-rounded and robust library of games, as well as an extremely low retail price. It's going to be an uphill battle for Microsoft, but we're sure they're prepared.

While the facts and opinions expressed in this feature seem to predict the success of the PS2, nothing is certain in this industry. No company has ever really dominated two generations in a row. Sony has definitely got a tough fight ahead of it, but it's not one to back down from strong competition. Neither are Sega, Nintendo and Microsoft.

FINAL FANTASY IX

Square's popular RPG series returns to its fantasy roots



When you consider that it's the last *Final Fantasy* title to appear on the console, *Final Fantasy IX* seems a bit out of place on the PlayStation. Rather than following the examples set by the last two *Final Fantasy* sequels, *FFIX* leaves the futuristic/cyber-world settings behind and has embraced the fantasy themes of the original titles. Basically, it's traded in its hi-tech cities and metal spacecraft for small, rural towns and wooden airships. This change of focus hasn't just affected the areas you visit or the vehicles you ride in, though. It also influences the underlying tone of the game and the look of the characters, monsters and weapons.

New Additions

For the most part, *FFIX* plays a lot like the last two sequels, but there are a few differences that require mentioning. Whenever you walk near an object that can be interacted with, an exclamation point appears above your character's head. No longer do you have to just randomly walk around and click on things, hoping that something will happen. If you see the "!", then you know that there's something there worth clicking on. Another interesting addition is the Active Time Event (ATE), which allows you to see events that are happening elsewhere in a town or the world. At certain times in the game, a little box will pop up, telling the player that an ATE is occurring. If the players chooses to, they can hit SELECT and watch the event. You can finish the entire game without viewing any of the ATEs, but you'll miss additional info and background details about the other characters.

Combat System

While the combat system, in *FFIX*, will seem very similar to *Final Fantasy* fans, some of the changes may take a bit of getting used to. Actually, there aren't that many new features, just elements taken from earlier *FF* titles. Turns are still based on the ATB (Active Time Battle) system established in *FFVII* and *FFVIII*, though. Parties can now have up to four characters in them, and each one can be positioned in the front or back row, depending on their abilities. If a character specializes in spells or long range weapons, it's better to put them in the back where they have less of a chance of being attacked. Speaking of specializing, the job classes from *FFV* have been brought back as well, which means that characters only learn abilities that they're associated with.

In *FFVIII*, a character that got hit with a certain number of attacks could perform a Limit Break attack. That's still basically the case now, but instead of a Limit Break, the character goes into a Trance. In this mode, more commands/spells are available and attacks become more powerful. You can tell when a character's about to go into Trance mode by looking at the red meter located at the bottom of their status window.

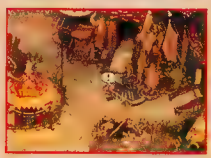
Guardian Forces

Most players should be excited to hear that a majority of the Guardian Forces are returning for this sequel, as well. Only now, they're called Eidolons and apparently take less time to cast. According to the developers of the game, the list of returning GFs includes Shiva, Ifrit, Odin, Leviathan, Bahumut and Carbuncle. There are probably more, but that's all that they would reveal. We have yet to reach a point in the game where Eidolons are used, so we can't yet comment on what they look like. Next month, we'll give the full details.

Best Final Fantasy Yet?

While not hyped as much as the last two titles, *Final Fantasy IX* is looking to be the most memorable of the PlayStation *Final Fantasy* titles. For a long time, fans have wanted the series to return to its fantasy roots. Now, they're getting their wish. Despite the fact that we haven't had a chance to get that far into game yet, we're predicting that this *Final Fantasy* is going to end up being one of the most enjoyable RPGs to date. Will it be the best *Final Fantasy* game of all time? We'll let you know soon enough.

Here's a close-up CG shot of three of the game's main characters. They are, from left to right, Vivi Orunitia, Zidane Tribal and Edward Steiner.

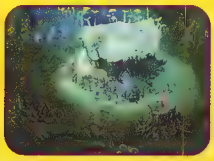


▲ When you get near an object that you can interact with, an exclamation will appear over your character's head, just like in this screenshot.

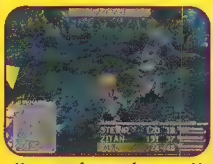
◀ Qina must be related somehow to Gene Simmons. Check out that huge tongue!

EVIL FOREST

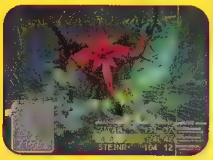
After crashing, our lovable characters discover that they're now in the Evil Forest, which got its name because of its lovely decor and lack of any really ugly monsters. NOT! This place is polluted with darkness, and it's going to try and get you in any way it can.



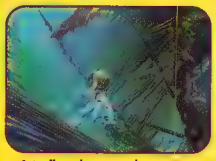
▲ The thing about the Evil Forest is that it doesn't look too evil right away. You see spots of sunlight every now and again. Everything looks tranquil... until the killing begins.



▲ Venture too far away from your ship and you start to run to enemies left and right. They aren't too difficult to defeat, but you know that things are going to get difficult soon.



▲ This is the main boss of the Evil Forest, and the cause of all the darkness you see. Defeat it and you might have a chance at saving the poor little forest creatures... or so you think.

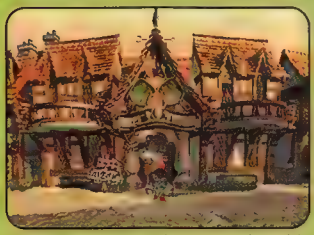


▲ Actually, when you do manage to destroy the giant evil plant, things start to go crazy. The forest starts turning to stone, right in front of your eyes. Needless to say, it's time to get out of there.

In The Beginning...

Final Fantasy IX opens up in a more carefree manner than either *FFVII* or *FVIII*. There isn't some epic fight or a raid on some industrial company. Rather, an airship slowly glides over a city and lands in front of the royal palace. The crew of the ship plans to entertain the city inhabitants with a classical play. Unfortunately, nothing quite works out like it's supposed to, and the ship and its crew end up fleeing for their lives. They barely clear the castle, when the ship crashes into the nearby forest. And that's when the actual game really begins.

▲ The game's title screen shows the airship arriving at the city. Everything looks calm and peaceful. Nothing's out of the ordinary. That is, of course, before all hell breaks loose.

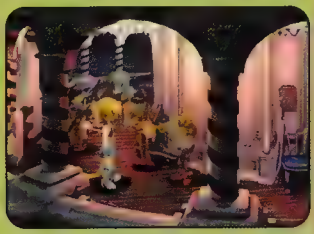


▲ After a brief sequence on the airship, the focus of the game shifts over to Vivi Orunitia. He happens to be in the city at the same time, and is trying to get into the showing of the play.

▲ Sadly, it turns out that the ticket he's been given is fake. Since there's no time to get another ticket, our little Orco friend has got to figure another way to get into the showing.

▲ After talking to one of the other city dwellers, Vivi manages to find his way into the palace via the rooftops. He sure is determined to see that play.

▲ Eventually, the play takes place with several of the airship's crew participating. Let's just say that it's certainly no Shakespearean production. Bad acting seems the norm.

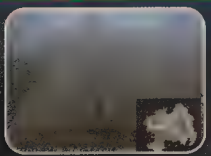


▲ During the play, some of the crew members sneak out in an attempt to kidnap the princess and take her with them. The ironic aspect is that she wants to come along.

▲ The info screen has been streamlined a lot since the last game and is now much easier to navigate. You won't see anymore of those confusing, overlapping screens in *FFIX*.

The Mist Continent

The main area that you travel around in is called the Mist Continent, aptly named for all the fog that seems to linger. It's where most of the first part of the game takes place. Unfortunately, we aren't sure how big the overall world of *FFIX* is, so we can't really comment on what percentage of the world this continent takes up. It looks pretty big, though.



▲ With all this mist, it often gets hard to see where you're supposed to be going. We guess that's the whole challenge. Luckily, you still have an overhead map to work with.

▲ The problem is that creatures like to attack adventurers who aren't sure where they're going. You're in for a lot of random battles if you walk around for too long.

▲ *Final Fantasy IX* is loaded with different types of mini-games. One of the first ones is this skiprope test that challenges you to successfully jump over the rope a certain number of times. If you do, you get an item from the girls.

◀ Since she carries a broom around with her all the time, Eiko Carol may be a witch.

◀ While a bit thick-headed, Edward Steiner does his best to protect the princess.

▲ The amount of detail in the backgrounds is staggering. It goes to show you what 300 people, working on a single game, can achieve. *FFIX* just looks breathtaking.

LINDBLUM GRAND CASTLE

he ends up sending you on a special quest.

▲ The castle looks quite intimidating as you approach it. Thank goodness that the inhabitants of it are a lot more inviting and are eager to see you. The King's even friendly.

▲ After a bit of waiting (all royalty seem to be late), you get a chance to see the King and talk to him. He's a pretty shy short fellow, but he's long on words. Just be patient.

▶ Since the game is set in a fantasy-style world, you'll see all sorts of strange charcter and enemy designs.

ACTIVE TIME EVENT

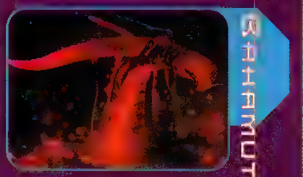
▲ If you hit SELECT when the ATE window comes up, you can choose which event you want to watch. After the event ends, the camera switches back your main character.

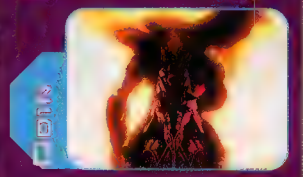
▲ More so than in most RPGs, the NPCs tend to have informative things to say. A majority still don't say anything important, but a lot will inform you about the town and provide you with useful tips.

◀ A young member of the race of Dark Mages, Vivi Orunitia packs a pretty good punch as your primary spellcaster.

A LOOK AT THE EIDOLONS

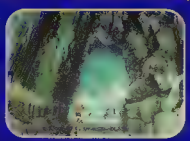
We haven't had a chance to see the Guardian Forces of *FFIX* in action yet, so we can't really comment on them. However, that doesn't mean we can't give you a peak at what they're going to look like. Here are some CG renders of two of the Eidolons, Bahamut and Odin.



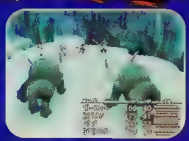


ICE CAVERN

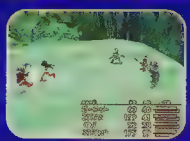
If you look at all the places that you have to travel through during the first few hours of the game, there is no location as frustrating as the Ice Cavern. Not only is the boss difficult to defeat, but you seem to get attacked by random monsters every 5-6 steps.



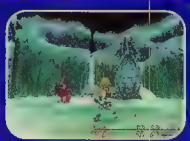
▲ Looking at the outside of the Ice Cavern, it seems pretty harmless. There shouldn't be anything inside that causes too many problems. Right? Wrong.



▲ Sadly, this area of the game personifies why we tend to hate random battle encounters. You have to fight something like every eight seconds or so. That plain sucks.



▲ The good thing is that the random battles give you a chance to build up your characters' levels before you have to take on the pain-in-the-butt boss character.



▲ Here's a look at the boss who ended up being the bane of our existence. We don't know if we were doing something wrong or not, but he was quite difficult to defeat.

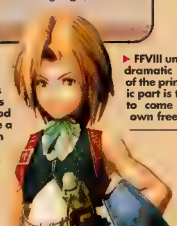
Final Fantasy IX: Our First Impressions

Generally, in our previews, we don't like to include too many opinions. That's because the games we talk about aren't completed yet. They're all pretty early, and it's hard to know how they'll turn out. In *Final Fantasy IX*'s case, we had a chance to play the finished Japanese version of the game. And since the U.S. version will be practically the same, we feel justified in providing our first impressions of the first couple of hours of gameplay.

STEVE: While being a huge fan of the PlayStation versions of *Final Fantasy*, I'm glad that the series has headed back to its original fantasy focus. And while the lead characters don't seem to be as memorable as Cloud or Squall, they still are very unique and seem strangely appropriate. Visually, this game is beautiful and beats out both *FFVII* and *FFVIII* in terms of originality and variety. There's just so much to take in. On the negative side, *FFIX* is quite a bit harder than the last two games. I can't even begin to count the number of times that I died in the first few hours of playing. Also, random encounters seem to occur a lot more now, with battles taking place almost every 6-8 seconds. In some areas, it's even worse. It actually gets to be quite frustrating because your characters can't seem to make much progress without taking on some enemies. Let's hope this doesn't occur throughout the whole game, because it would really detract from the overall experience.

RANDY: Up until *Final Fantasy VII*, the series has been influenced more by fantasy rather than science fiction. Since I have always favored the fantasy look and theme, its return is very welcome. The unique blend of blatantly fictional character models, and overall fantastic appearance of towns and other areas with a compelling story captivates me more than realistic, future atmosphere of *VII* and *VIII*. Somehow the other two seem more artificial and less involving. Besides this change, the game seems to be everything we have come to expect: great graphics, music, and gameplay. The only major problem I can detect up until this point is the game's difficulty. Although I may be having trouble because of the language, *FFIX* still seems too HARD!!!

▶ **FFVIII unfolds with a dramatic kidnapping of the princess. The ironic part is that she wants to come along of her own free will.**



▶ **One of the main characters in the game, Zidane Tribal is your typical, misunderstood hero who just happens to have a tail. Could love bloom between him and the princess?**

Final Fantasy IX: The Japanese Launch

You haven't lived until you've been in Japan for the launch of a new *Final Fantasy* title. Go to any major shopping area and you'll see a long line of people waiting patiently for their copy of the game. *Final Fantasy IX* drew even larger lines, despite the fact that it wasn't marketed as much as the past two games. Apparently Japanese gamers are really into the fantasy setting, which is probably why the title sold around 2.6 million copies on the first day. In comparison, *FFVII* took about a week to reach that same milestone. Anyway, check out these photos, taken just shortly after the stores opened on launch day.

▲ **Many of the stores had up posters and signs in order to let gamers know that the game was out. We're sure pretty much every gamer knew already.**

▲ **Lines like this were commonplace on the day that *FFIX* launched. In fact, they're commonplace anytime a major game is released in Japan.**

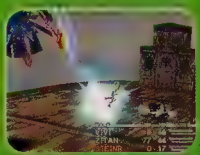
▲ **As with any RPG, this is the last screen you ever want to see. Fortunately, the save points in *FFIX* are close enough together that you never really have to backtrack that much.**

Traveling The Skies

▲ [illegible]

▲ Take a gander at what your [illegible]

▲ [illegible]



▲ [illegible]

Destruction Derby Raw

You better get some insurance

Well, it's been some time, but the *Destruction Derby* series has finally resurfaced and is crashing its way onto the PlayStation this fall. The third title in the series, *Raw*, packs over 30 different tracks, many of which are designed to get you into huge wrecks, and about 24 different cars, a majority of which are initially hidden.

The challenge, this time, is not just in getting first place in the races, which is often difficult to do, but also in accumulating the required number of destruction points in order complete each level. These points are awarded each time you cause some damage to the other cars. The greater the damage, the greater the points. The only problem is that when you hit an opponent, you often get damaged yourself. Take too much damage and your car is toast. Game over, man.

Being huge fans of the *Destruction Derby* series, we were happy to see the inclusion of numerous game modes aside from the straight demolition racing. The classic *Destruction Derby* is here, along with some nice surprises like "Pass Da Bomb", where the object is to be the person without the bomb when it explodes, and "Skyscraper", where you have to brawl it out on the roofs of various highrises. Where else can you have this much fun smashing up your car?

◀ Whenever you hit someone and cause them to crash or swerve, you are awarded points. Also, the name of the "trick" that you caused shows up on the screen.

▲ While there are over 30 different tracks in the game, you don't have to play them in a linear manner. You have a good deal of freedom in selecting which tracks you want to race on.

▲ The AI of the computer controlled cars is actually quite good and they'll ram you if given the chance. Whatever you do, don't get in the middle of a pack of them or you're toast.

◀ Pass Da Bomb is a great addition to the game and is especially fun when playing against your friends. The object is to pass the bomb to another car by touching it with your own.

▲ Cars get damaged rather realistically. You'll see pieces fly off whenever you hit another car or slam against a wall. Crash too often and you're car won't run anymore.

Publisher THQ
Developer Dark Black

Release Date Fall
Type Skateboarding

1-2 RP

MTV Sports Skateboarding

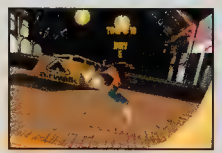
THQ gets in on the skateboarding craze

THQ's entry into the burgeoning PlayStation skateboarding category will feature at least 30 pro and fantasy skaters (including the likes of X-Games star Andy Macdonald) with which to tackle the game's 40 indoor and outdoor locations. Your skater will be able to draw from a pool of sixty tricks, which will be linkable to create custom combos — the bigger the better, as the points they result in will earn you money and better sponsorships.

Perhaps the most unique feature of the game, however, promises to be the fact that computer-controller AI skaters will be competing for points simultaneously with your skater, which means that the possibility for collisions is high. If that's not enough challenge, the game will also boast ten different modes, ranging from Freeskate to a "hot potato"-style Timebomb contest.

With its bevy of sponsorships and licensed music (including Cypress Hill, Pennywise, and others) *MTV Sports Skateboarding* looks to have the skateboarding culture aspect down pat. We'll find out how the rest of the game holds up

▲ Multiple types of grinds will be possible by using the directional pad before landing on a rail.



▲ The Survival Mode starts you off with very little time. You must perform high-value tricks to keep the timer from running out.

▲ You'll be able to take several fantasy skaters through the Lifestyle mode, building their stats and sponsorships along the way.

▲ In the game's MTV Hunt mode, you'll have to collect all of the MTV logos in a stage before the time runs out.

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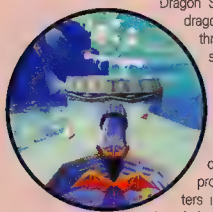
SPYRO: Year Of The Dragon

Sony's winged wonder is back — and he's brought friends

Who would've thought that a little dragon that can barely fly would complete his first adventure, let alone go on to star in two sequels? Now on his third outing, Spyro has a much larger world to explore, new tasks to complete, and a supporting cast of playable characters, each with their own unique (and very useful) gameplay mechanics to learn.

As the story goes, every 100 years, fairies deliver the latest batch of dragon eggs to Spyro's home turf of Dragon Shores, hence the year of the dragon. Only this year, an evil sorceress and her minions have stolen the eggs and spirited them away to the Forgotten World, which lies beneath Dragon Shores. Spyro's the only dragon small enough to fit through the hole they left, so his role as adventurer is quickly cemented.



▲ These cannons are useful for more than just blasting enemies — shooting ice crystals off these platforms uncovers updrafts to help Spyro reach higher places.

Drawing on this backstory, the game's underlying goal is to collect all 148 dragon eggs and, in the process, hatch the little critters inside — each of which has their own name, look, and personality. You'll earn these eggs by completing a variety of tasks, which range from simple "clear all enemies from the area" affairs to more elaborate puzzles and even mini-games. Of course, completing this myriad of tasks won't be an easy romp by any means, and that's where Spyro's friends come into play.

As you progress through the game, Spyro will encounter four critters, each with their own special abilities, including a flying penguin, high-jumping kangaroo, gun-toting space monkey, and a Yeti-like strongman. They can all do things Spyro can't, and each will have their own stages to solve. And when Spyro goes head-to-head with the game's mini-bosses, they'll be there to back him up.

That's not to say that Spyro won't have his own share of advantages, though. In fact, in addition to his basic charge, fire, and head-stomp moves, you'll be able to operate machinery, fire cannon turrets, drive vehicles (such as a submarine) and acquire flame, flight, and invulnerability power-ups along the way that are essential to victory.

Promising 37 levels in total and main levels that are nearly four times the size of *Spyro 2*'s, you can be sure *Spyro: Year of the Dragon* will offer up a sizeable quest. And with all the gameplay additions, it's shaping up to be a much deeper one to boot. The game's slated to hit this October, so fans of the first two (and platform fanatics in general) will want to keep an eye out.

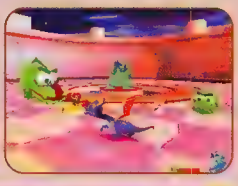
▲ Spyro's back again; this time, he's trying to save all the dragon eggs from an evil fate.

▲ Bentley's ice club can be used to deflect objects, which can then hit enemies and activate switches from afar.

▶ As if the normal enemies weren't tough enough, you'll also encounter a number of clever (and powerful) mini-bosses on your quest.

◀ This swamp level boasts lots of atmosphere and lanterns that must be lit while avoiding flying enemies.

▲ The game's speed rounds have been improved via the addition of speed boosts and rockets that Spyro can fire at enemies.



Spyro's not alone on his quest — he's got four buddies to back him up, each with their own unique abilities. You'll have to master them all in order to uncover all of the dragon eggs.

▲ Sheila is a springy-legged mountain kangaroo who's capable of jumping extremely high and kicking enemies. Plus, she's got big, beautiful, blue eyes.

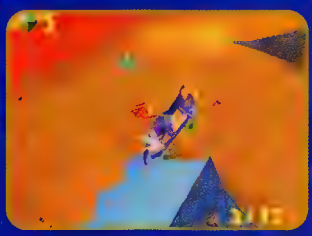
▲ Penguins can't fly, but Sgt. Byrd can. Not only that, he's armed with twin rocket launchers and can carry heavy objects between his feet and drop them like bombs.

▲ Bentley's a super-strong Yeti-like beast who can't jump very high, but he can smash objects with his ice club and also use it to deflect projectiles.

▲ The most usual sidekick by far is Agent 9, a "space monkey" who wields a powerful laser blaster and participates in shooter-like stages. Hey, we love monkeys!

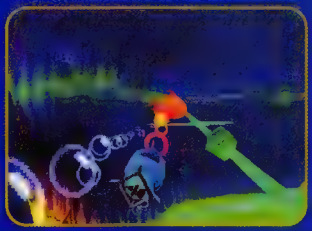
Mini-Games

In addition to the various tasks you're assigned, you'll also be able to acquire dragon eggs by successfully completing the mini-games scattered throughout the game. They're accessed via the main game worlds, so finding them will be an adventure of its own.



▲ One of the cooler-looking mini-games sees Spyro pulling off stunts on a skateboard with the aid of his wings. Talk about major air!

▲ The Yeti front makes a comeback in this pugilistic shewdown, complete with jabs, body blows, hooks, and a fairy ring girl.



▲ In this mini-game, you hop into a submarine and blast other subs out of the water. It looks easy, but you have to get a solid lock-on before firing — and these guys are fast.

New Challenges

Sometimes, earning a dragon egg will only require clearing all the enemies out of an area — but most of the time it'll mean completing one of the tasks the game's inhabitants hands you. There are a lot of 'em, and each one is different.

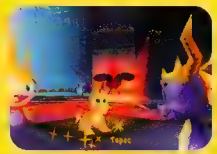
▲ In Cloud City (not the *Star Wars* one), you'll be tasked with helping three sun seeds reach a cauldron without burning out. Your fiery breath should do the job, but you'll have to keep up with the speedy little guys.

▲ In this world, you'll have to use a series of magnifying glasses to melt ice walls and dispose of enemies. Ouch!

Gotta Hatch 'Em All!

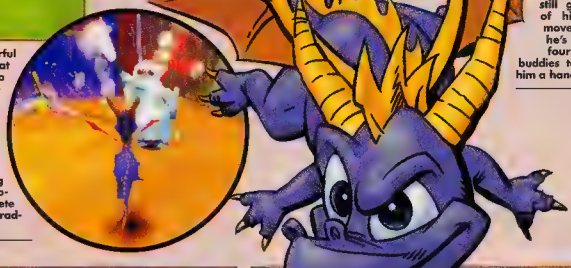
The eggs you've got to track down aren't just of the hard-boiled variety. Each one has a little dragon inside just waiting to hatch, and when they do you'll find that they all have their own unique name, looks, and personality — kinda like the monkeys in *Ape Escape*.

▲ Complete a task, and a dragon egg will be presented to you.



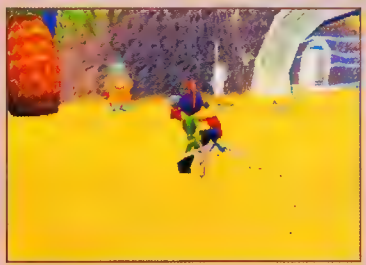
▲ Before you can say "over easy," the little guy will pop out and thank you. How cute!

▲ Sheila's got a powerful downward stomp that you'll have to use to crush these monster-generating huts. If you don't, they'll just keep on coming.

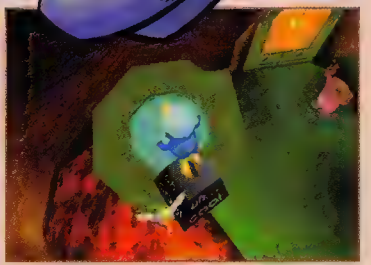


◀ Spyro's still got all of his old moves, plus he's got four new buddies to give him a hand.

▶ There's even going to be a pirate ship-themed level, complete with Rynocs masquerading as ghosts.



▲ Agent 9's home turf also doubles as a training course, complete with loads of enemies to blast with his laser pistol.



▲ In this stage, you've got to drop weights on switches and fend off flying enemies while doing so.

PARASITE EVE 2

Square's Answer to Resident Evil?

▲ Don't let her beautiful looks mesmerize you. She is deadly!

The NMC's are airborne! Once this deadly virus enters the body, it begins mutating the organism's DNA, which alters the animal into a monster. Although many monsters are mutated beyond recognition, it appears that everything from people to elephants make an appearance in *Parasite Eve 2*.

Once again, you play the role of the attractive Aya Brea, who must destroy this virus and all of its deadly mutants. To aid in Aya's mission, players are provided with various weapons, such as grenade launchers, machine guns, and pistols. Aya also has eight different magical attacks which can be leveled up with experience points that players receive in battles.

Those who thought that the battles in the first game seemed a little slow, but liked the idea of being able to move around freely, will be happy with the improved fighting interface. The battles feel much more action-oriented, like those found in the *Resident Evil* series. Although RPG purists may think this style strays too far from the standard RPG battle system, the inclusion of magic, experience points, and singular attack patterns for each enemy maintains an RPG feel in *Parasite Eve 2*.

If anything, the fast-paced action adds an element of strategy to the battle system. Since each enemy has unique defenses and attacks, knowing your enemy is necessary to proceed through the game. This doesn't simply involve taking advantage of enemies' defensive weaknesses, but using their attack patterns against them. Although Aya's defensive strategies involve only tricking enemies by running and dodging, perhaps Square could make the battles even more exciting if Aya could interact with the backgrounds. Imagine setting traps, or performing crazy moves from the walls on enemies.

With beautiful graphics, a dark soundtrack, and a decent story to compliment some interesting gameplay, *Parasite Eve 2* is shaping up to be a full-blown virus none will be able to resist.

▲ When being charged by a bull mutant in a corner, using magic will help it in its tracks.

RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY!

Dodging attacks usually leaves enemies open to counterattack. Counterattacking is a useful tactic to conserve ammunition and magic points. Even knowing when to run away from certain enemies may be necessary in order to win later fights.

▲ Dodging this mutant dog (or bull?) and letting it knock itself out is the way to victory in this battle.

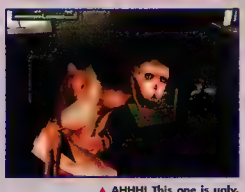
▲ This is not the situation to be in. It is usually better to run from the bats; they are cheap.

LOOKIN' GOOD!

The graphics in this game are great; the CG sequences are especially gorgeous. Trust us, the provocative shower scenes are worth it!

▶ Aya takes a shower! Lara has nothin' that Aya can't handle. Is it getting hot in here?

Wow! We have no idea what this thing is, but it looks cool, huh?

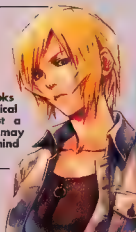


▲ AHHH! This one is ugly. These mutants definitely remembered to take their ugly pill this morning.

▲ Aya takes crap from no one who solicits sex. These flashers are easily finished off with a machine gun.

▲ Jax should take a lesson from Aya in Whoop-Ass 101. Now, *that's* a Fatality.

▲ Here's Aya as a child. Aya's past is important to understanding the storyline. Be sure to pay attention to the flashbacks.



▶ She looks like a typical hottie, but a monster may reside behind that face.

▼ This seemingly mutated elephant is tough. Make sure Aya is well equipped with a lot of bullets and MP boosters before combat.

▲ Up to this point, some of the CGs of Aya encouraged very bad thoughts. But a stinky woman is always a turn-off. Thanks a lot for ruining my fantasy, Square!

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PlayStation

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Animated Violence

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Publisher Titus
Developer Polygon Magic

Release Date Fall
Type Action/Mini-games

INCREDIBLE CRISIS

Step into the shoes of the "typical" Japanese family

By far, *Incredible Crisis* is one of the strangest and most unique titles we've seen on the PlayStation. It's got a premise that just makes you sit back and say "Wow!" The game follows the daily adventures of a Japanese family. Only, on this particular day, the family members are having their share of bad luck. Everything that can go wrong seems to go wrong, and it's up to you to make sure that they all make it through the day in one piece.

In order to do that, you've got to play through a collection of different mini-games, ranging from simple hand-eye coordination exercises to more advanced action-based segments. There's even a time when you have to guide the wife through a bank full of armed terrorists. Basically, if you can think of it, it's probably in this game.

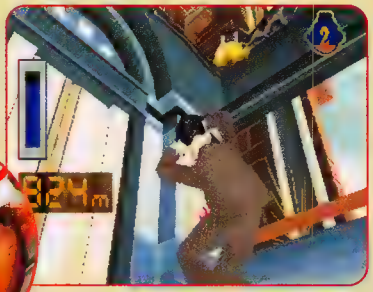
The PlayStation is very lacking in the party games department, so *Incredible Crisis* comes as a welcome surprise. It's looking to be one of those titles that you can play over and over again and never get bored. And every time you play it, we'll bet it brings a smile to your face... or at least a puzzling look.

◀ **In a scene straight out of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, our "typical" Japanese business man has to outrun a large boulder, which happens to be rolling through his offices.**

▲ **The game starts out with a rather simplistic, *Bust-A-Groove*-style dancing game, where you have to hit certain directions and buttons on the beat. Check out those moves!**

▲ **After falling out of a building, you end up on this flag pole and have to make it back inside. Hit the X button at just the right times and you can maintain your balance.**

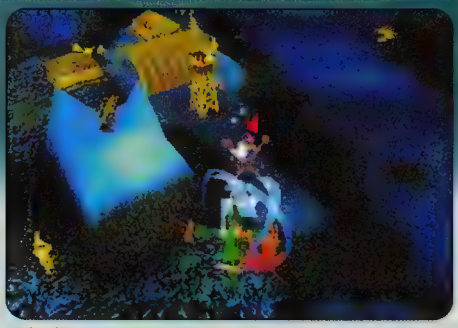
▼ **Not all the games are action-based. Some, like this ambulance quiz, will test your knowledge on everything from world history to basic mathematics. How smart are you?**



▲ **This game kind of plays like a Konami *Track & Field* title. You mash the button as fast as you can in order to slow down the elevator. However, you also have move out of the way of incoming debris.**

Publisher 3DO
Developer 3DO

Release Date Fall
Type Action



▲ **When things get out of hand, it may be prudent to activate your shield. Otherwise, things may get just a little bit "toasty".**

ARMY MEN: Air Attack 2

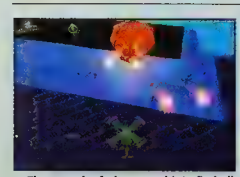
Army Men terrorize toy land!

▼ **This game gets quite chaotic with fire coming from all directions.**

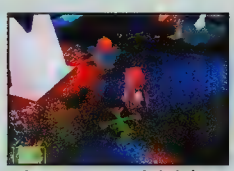
The latest addition to the *Army Men* series is 3DO's *Air Attack 2*. Already this title seems much more promising then previous installments, with 26 new missions in ten different environments, such as the Japanese Garden, Halloween Night, and Wild West levels. Halloween Night is particularly fun. You must battle fire-breathing pumpkins and attacking enemy infantry in an attempt to rescue the head of a decapitated doll — it seems like cigarettes weren't the only things smoked during the development of this level...

Air Attack 2 also has five new helicopters, each equipped with a machine gun, missiles, and a grappling cable. You can use this cable not only as a means to collect items, but also as a weapon. For example, you can grab a pumpkin and launch it into your opposition! So far, launching various objects at enemies has been one of the more enjoyable new features.

To increase the replay value of the game, 3DO also included tons of cheats and a system that allows players to unlock hidden vehicle and chopper capabilities. Although the quality of former games has been mediocre at best, lets hope that 3DO can stay on track and redeem the *Army Men* name



▲ **The speed of the pumpkin's fireballs makes dodging these projectiles tough.**



▲ **Listen to your commander in the bottom left corner. His hints are very useful.**

▲ **The chopper's super weapon not only looks cool, but causes serious damage.**

DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK.

BE AFRAID OF WHAT'S IN IT.

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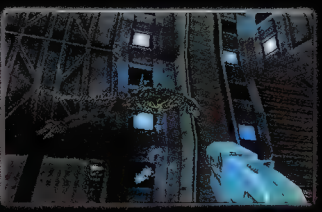
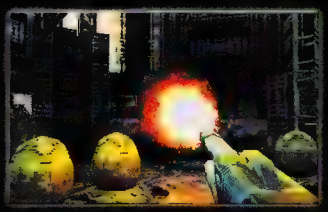
Gamers Republic

ALIEN RESURRECTION





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PlayStation

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MATURE M Animated Blood and Gore Animated Violence

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Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer Black Box

Release Date Fall
Type Racing

NASCAR 2001

EA goes round and round... and sometimes to the right, as well

Wanna climb into a high-powered racing car and turn left a whole bunch of times? Well then, *NASCAR 2001* may be just the ticket you're looking for. EA's latest version, due out this fall, features a brand new game engine with enhanced graphics and car physics. But wait; there's more...

NASCAR 2001 will feature 35 active drivers and cars updated for the 2000 season. Each of the computer AI cars will emulate the driving style of its real driver: Dale Earnhardt will dive low into the corners, while Jeff Gordon powers smoothly through the turns. You'll be able to compete as your favorite driver or you can create your own good ol' boy and try to beat Richard Petty's record of seven NASCAR championships. There will also be 19 official NASCAR tracks, as well as five fantasy road courses, set in New York, San Francisco, Hawaii, Colorado and Kansas (Kansas?).

Even at only 85% complete, the cars are beautifully detailed and the tracks, at least the ones that are currently finished, are pure eye candy. Couple this with Single Race and Season Modes, one or two player gaming, and true to life sound effects, and it looks like EA will be sitting in the pole position this fall. We'll let you know more when we hear more. Y'all stay tuned.

▲ This inside the cockpit view really makes you feel like you're a "good ol' boy". All that's missing is the drink holder...

▲ The Garage area will allow you to set your car up for each race or for your particular driving style.

▶ The lighting effects are breathtaking. With the sun in your eyes, it's mighty hard to see the next turn.

▶ A NASCAR nightmare: "Hey! What the... Oh no! It's a right turn! Aaaaah! What do I do???"

▲ This poor sumbitch doesn't know it yet, but he's getting ready to eat my dust...

Publisher Capcom
Developer Capcom

Release Date TBA
Type Action/Platform

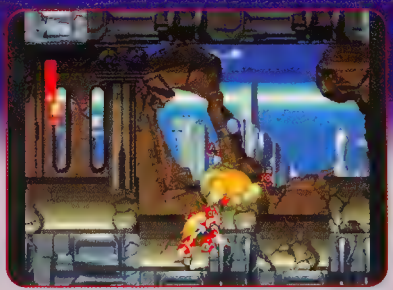
MEGA MAN X5

Capcom surprises with a new 2D Mega Man game

Strangely enough, one of the most surprising titles at this past E3 wasn't on the PlayStation2. In fact, it wasn't even 3D. It was the latest sequel in a series that first appeared on the Super Nintendo, *Mega Man X5*. Yup, the lovable robot hero is back and he's brought along his partner, Zero, too.

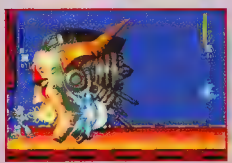
While similar to *X4* in may ways, this sequel does introduce a few new things to the *Mega Man* formula. This time around, levels have specific time limits. How quickly you complete a stage will affect the game's ending as well as various other events. You can also create different weapons and weapon enhancements based on the energy you steal from bosses. Oh, yeah. Sigma is once again the main villain and the cause of all your problems. He's diverted an asteroid-based space colony, causing it to be on a collision course with Earth. Now, you've only got 48 hours to intercept the asteroid and prevent the total destruction of the planet. Piece of cake.

Considering we're pretty much at the tail-end of the PlayStation's lifespan, it's nice to see Capcom still releasing games that have that classic old-school look and feel. The platform fans out there are sure to appreciate it. We know we do.



▲ While Mega Man X relies on his blaster, Zero likes to use his sword. It doesn't have much range, but it sure can cause a lot of damage. Most enemies are destroyed with just a single swipe.

Zero's weapon of choice is his sword; the evil Sigma better watch out!



▲ Bosses come in all shapes and sizes. This is the first one you'll come across in the game. He's pretty easy, especially when you consider that he doesn't even have a body.

▲ Here's the general menu where you can select which level you want to play. There are eight initial worlds, and all must be completed before you can take on Sigma.

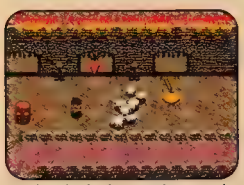
◀ The amount of detail in *Mega Man X5* is quite impressive. Capcom's artists have really outdone themselves this time and given the 2D backgrounds a lot of depth.

SHEEP

This game's baa-d to the bone

Now we've seen it all. Despite having played games throughout our entire lives, nothing could have prepared us for the unique experience that is *Sheep*. This is, by far, one of the most unique and bewildering games we've ever come across. Put simply, the object of the title is to safely direct sheep, through various obstacles, to UFO pick-up points. Now, that sounds a lot easier than it is. The sheep suffer from what the developers call "Artificial Stupidity", meaning they act extremely unpredictably and will walk in front of a harvester at any chance they get. You can't let them out of your sight for even a second, or you'll just end up with Sunday dinner. Yum... mint sauce.

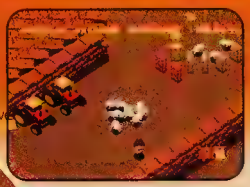
▶ Some of the levels can get quite large and have multiple ways through them. In order to help you out, arrows will point out the different ways you can go.



▲ In later levels, things tend to get a be stranger. You have to worry about a lot more things, like these giant vegetables. They'll smash your poor sheep flatter than a pancake. Mmm... sheep pancake...

With it's simplistic controls and great amount of depth, *Sheep* should cater well to both hard-core gamers and well as the mainstream audience. And we're sure that's exactly what Empire Interactive is counting on. Expect a full review on this innovative title in the near future.

▶ You can earn extra points by getting your sheep to perform certain tasks in the levels. Here, something as simple as getting them to jump over hurdles gives you the big score.



▲ Sheep aren't exactly the sharpest knives in the drawer. In fact, Empire Interactive refers to the little wooly critters' AI as "Artificial Stupidity."

▲ If you don't pay attention and guide them right, your sheep will end up being run over by something like this tractor. And you just know that they won't appreciate that.

Publisher THQ
Developer Radical Entertainment
Release Date Fall
Type Snowboarding

MTV SPORTS PURE RIDE

Build a better mountain — and ride it!

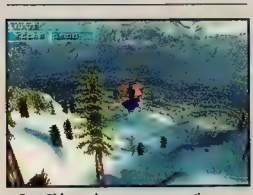
You'll catch serious air while playing MTV's *Pure Ride*.

The second snowboarding title from THQ promises something that's sure to extend its replay value: The ability to create and ride your own custom mountain runs. Using the game's editor, you'll be able to place jumps, rails, trees, and other objects on a 2D grid, pop in to check it out, and then adjust everything until it's just right.

In addition to this intriguing option, the game will come bearing a bevy of improvements over last year's offering, including revised controls, new tricks, and 20 new courses. There'll also be four real-world snowboarders to choose from, in addition to several fantasy characters; not to mention 20 authentic snowboards and al sorts of licensed clothing to outfit your boarder with.

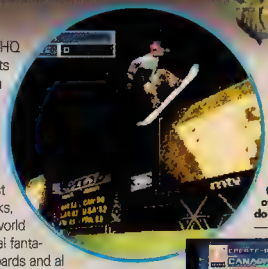
Rather than just offer one route down a mountain, the game will encourage carving your own way to the finish line by using shortcuts and various paths. Several main gameplay modes are planned, including a full tournament, and a full-featured replay mode (complete with slow-mo and other effects) is also in the works.

▲ The Specialist mode will let you test your skills at a variety of specialized events, including the half-pipe.



▲ Free Ride mode opens up an entire mountain for you to wind your way down.

▲ There'll be all sorts of opportunities to jump, grind, and show off your airborne moves on the game's 20 courses.



◀ Big Air is another component of specialist mode. As its name suggests, the goal is to rush down a slope and catch the most elevation possible off the ramp at its end while doing tricks.

▲ The create-a-mountain mode will let you customize your own run; placing trees, rails, jumps, and even semi trucks on a grid-based mountain blueprint.

Publisher Acclaim
Developer Z-Axis

Release Date Fall
Type Sports

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX

Extreme sports with an extreme amount of moves

BMX stunt games are set to explode on PlayStation in the next few months, but up until now we've only been privy to screens of the various offerings in the works. That all changed recently when we got a copy of Acclaim's effort, *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX*, in the office for some good old fashioned hands-on gameplay — and so far, we're liking what we see.

The most impressive aspect of the early demo is the trick system, which enables you to mix and match tricks and modifiers (such as "no hands" or "no feet") on the fly to create custom tricks. You could even launch into a No Hander, follow it up with a No Footer, and create a Nothing — you'll completely let go of the bike for a split second. Acclaim promises that more than 1,000 unique tricks can be performed this way, not counting the combos possible when you string them together.

So far, we've seen six of the 12 locations planned for the final version of the game. The famed BMX training ground at Woodward Camp in Pennsylvania offers dirt, street, and vert variations, as does the Greenville facility. Each locale offers its own unique set of challenges, whether they be the strategically-placed ramps of the vert courses or the pools, hills, and walls of the outdoor runs.

Graphically, the game is also shaping up quite well. The stages all sport a good variety of textures, you can see much farther than in past-generation extreme sports title, and the skeletal animation system used for the riders produces some smooth, life-like reactions during tricks.

Throw in a career mode that'll let you take your chosen rider from rags to (hopefully) riches, and changes their appearance and abilities accordingly, and you've got a mighty tasty recipe. Whether it still tastes as good when the game's completed this fall remains to be seen, but we'll keep you up-to-date with the latest info until then.

▶ The Greenville vert course will offer plenty of opportunity to catch some major air.

▶ These mounds on the Woodward dirt course should be perfect for practicing lots of quick Big Air moves in a row.

MAJOR AIR

You thought ramps were the only way to catch some major air... think again. On the Greenville dirt course, for example, trampolines are strategically placed to send you skyward if you hit them. You can even bounce from one to the next and perform tricks in between.

▲ The first trampoline on this course comes right after a gap that must be jumped, and can be used to bounce onto a second trampoline.

▲ Hitting the second trampoline will send you even higher...

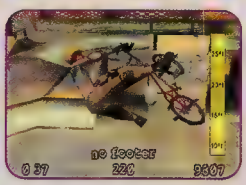
▲ ...until you're high enough to grind along this rail, which is placed atop two telephone poles!

MAKE YOUR OWN TRICKS

▲ Greenville's street course offers such challenges as peg grinding off a railing and continuing it along the back of a semi trailer.

▲ Whenever you execute a big jump, a ruler-like meter appears at the side of the screen to show you how high you've gotten.

▲ Woodward's famous vert course boasts some of the coolest ramp layouts we've ever seen.



▲ Most of the game's tricks look risky — this one could mean serious trouble if the rider landed on his bike too hard.

"The most impressive racing engine we've ever seen." –dailyradar.com

"A killer racing experience." –GamePro

"Fantastic graphics, fast speeds, slick cars. Any questions?"–ign.com

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MADDEN NFL 2001

EA looks to field a winning team in an old stadium

This September, *Madden* football will be coming back to the original PlayStation for what may be its last stand before moving over to the PS2. Does this mean that the team at EA Sports just sat on their hands and took the easy way out? Absolutely not!

Madden NFL 2001 looks great, sounds great, and plays great, even though it's still got a few months to go before its release this fall. EA Sports has pulled out all the stops and added a slew of new graphics and features that will make this game hard to stop. Let's check out the lineup.

Madden's new player models show off a wealth of detail; wristbands, visors, facemasks, turftape and elbow pads are included for every player, exactly the way they wear 'em. You'll be able to recognize your favorite offensive lineman by his tape job. EA has also juggled the game physics to make blocks and tackles more realistic. A small DB will have trouble downing a fullback, while quick receivers will easily blow by a linebacker assigned to cover them. Touchdown celebrations were also made player specific, as were the taunts us fans know and love so much.

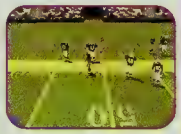
The players aren't the only ones who got some extra attention. NFL coaches were recorded shouting encouragement to their players, as well as giving the refs some loud "advice" on how to call the game. John Madden is back again, obviously, but this time, his longtime broadcast buddy, Pat Summerall, will be doing the play by play.

Other goodies to be included are a new defensive setup that will allow players to read the offense at the line of scrimmage and adjust pass rush routes, linebacker drops and pass coverage instantly. There's also a two minute drill feature that will allow up to 10 players compete against each other to see who can score the most points.

It's also now possible to collect in-game "Madden cards" by performing certain tasks during a game. These cards can be collected and traded with friends via memory cards. Add in the Create A Team feature, and *Madden NFL 2001* is looking to be the main contender in the videogame football league.

With a couple of months to go before the release of *Madden NFL 2001*, EA Sports certainly seems to have a real winner on its hands. It would take a catastrophic turnover to hurt this long time favorite title.

▲ After a flagrant defensive foul, the offending player usually steps forward to plead his case. "It wasn't me... it was, uh... the evil me"



▲ The Oakland Raiders take the field and exhort the typically rabid Oakland crowd... or maybe they're just saying "Don't shoot me!"

◀ *Madden 2001* faithfully recreates all of the stadiums of the NFL. Just check out the HHH Metrodome, located in Minnesota. Locals call it "The Baggy".

THE PLAY'S THE THING

▲ After the ball is snapped, Viking QB Culpepper drops back and starts reading the defense.

▲ Culpepper hits receiver Chris Carter, who's almost dropped by a Patriot defensive back.

Carter keeps his balance and tacks on 15 more yards before being dropped by the free safety.

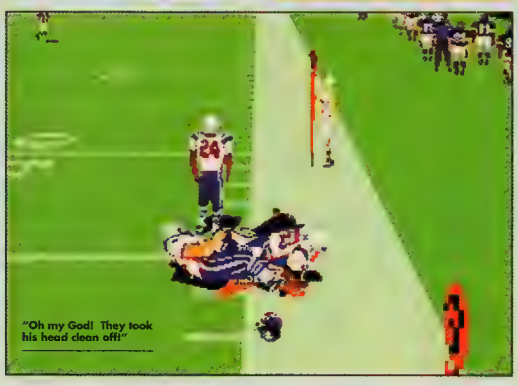
DANCE FEVER

While the NFL has often been called the No Fun League, they'll still allow a bit of dancing after a score. Let's compare and contrast the scoring and dancing styles of two of Oakland's finest — Tim Brown and Ty Wheately.

▲ Tim Brown's forte is the long bomb and his dance style reflects that, with the hands in the air motif. A nice downfield block opened up the run after the catch.

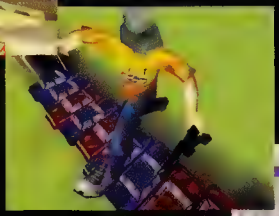
▲ On the other hand, running back Ty Wheately uses a brutal straight arm to open the way for his touchdown run. He celebrates with a simple "Raise the roof" move.

▶ Your intrepid previewer completely blows the pass coverage and Terry Glenn is off for a touchdown.

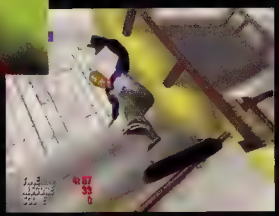


"Oh my God! They took his head clean off!"

Andy Macdonald
1999 X-Games Gold Medal, Vert Doubles
1999 World Cup Vert & Overall Combined Champion
World record for Longest Skateboard Jump – 56' 10.75"



Featured Skaters -
Andy Macdonald
Rick Howard
Josh Kalis
Keith Hufnagel
Danny Way
Brian Howard
Stevie Williams
Jen O'Brien
Colin McKay
Rob Dyrdek
Alan Petersen



You Can't Defy Gravity. But You Can, However, Taunt It A Little.

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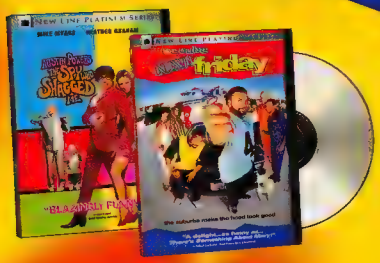

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Code Junkies

your complete monthly source for all the newest and coolest playstation cheats

Face it—you're a Code Junkie. You need every new PlayStation cheat and password, and you want 'em *now*. Don't worry, our sources are the best. Stay connected with PSM and your supply will never go dry.

code fix of the month

Every month there's usually at least one code in Code Junkies that totally blows open a game or increases the fun factor of a title to another level. Each month we pull out those exceptional codes and cheat gems and award them with the dubious honor of Code Fix Of The Month. Look here for the hottest of the hot codes for the best games each month.

Nightmare Creatures 2
Level Select And More

If you get stuck while playing the gore-fest *Nightmare Creatures 2*, you can now easily skip to the next level by using this cool level select we found. This is actually a debug menu that was left in the final game by the developers. Once opened, you will be able to jump levels in the game, but take care in using it, as you can screw up your character's animations and even crash the game. To unlock the level select, go to the Main Menu and press and hold L1 + R2 + ▲ + □ and then press SELECT. If done correctly, the level select will appear in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.

Enter the cheat at the Main Menu and the level select will appear in the upper left corner of the screen. The top line is the level select which you use 1 and 2 to change the level and press X while highlighting New Game to enter it. The second line is what you don't want to mess with (and disappears after either demo runs or you start a game). If you press ○ or □, the value of the second line will alter your character's animation, making him completely uncontrollable.

Invincibility

We've also come across the all important invincibility code for the game. Once this cheat is entered, you never have to worry about dying and starting over ever again — your health bar even disappears. To become invincible, start a game and during gameplay, pause the game by pressing START. At the pause menu, press and hold L1 + R2 + ▲ + □ and press SELECT (the same code you used to unlock the level select). When done correctly, the Cheats Menu will appear and will have a Hero Unlimited Live option. Switch this option on and when you return to the game, you cannot die.

Enter the invincibility code at the pause screen.

When the code is entered correctly the Cheats Menu will appear. Just turn the Hero Unlimited Live option ON and you'll invincible when you go back to the game.

Grind Session
Have All The Tricks

Normally you would have to play through the Tournament Mode for some time before you actually unlock all the tricks that your skater can pull off, but now just enter the following code and all the tricks are yours right from the start. To get all the tricks, start a Tournament and pause the game during the action by pressing START. Now on the pause screen, press ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ← → ← → ○ and a message will be displayed to confirm that you entered the code right. Un-pause the game and every trick in the book will be yours to try.

Start a game in Tournament Mode and pause the game before you try to enter the All Tricks code. You will see a message indicating that you unlocked the tricks if you enter the cheat correctly.

Normally tricks are unlocked one at a time as you complete levels in the Tournament Mode, but now you can have access to them all right from the start. After you enter the code, Pause the game again and check the trick list for the new tricks.

Glover
All The Cheats You Need

The following cheats will definitely get you through the game if you were having trouble before. You will still have to get that ball through some tough spots, but at least now you can keep going without worrying about losing life and starting over. If a level is just too tough, you can now skip it by using the Checkpoint select cheat. All of the following are entered at the pause screen you can reach by pressing START anytime during gameplay. When you enter a cheat correctly a message will appear with the cheat's name.

Enter the cheats while the game is paused and as you press the buttons to enter the cheats they will appear along the bottom of the screen.

R1, R1, R1, L1, L1, L2, L1, L2 . . .	Cheat Menu
R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, L2, R2, L2	Infinite Lives
L2, L2, R2, L2, L2, L2, R1, L1. . . .	Infinite Health
R2, R2, L2, L1, R1, R1, R2, L1	Checkpoint Select
R1, L2, L2, R1, L2, L1, R2, R1 . . .	Call Ball
L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2 . .	Disable All Cheats

When a code is entered right you'll get a message like this.

Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed

Hide Your Plays

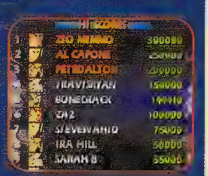
Just like in *NFL Blitz (Arena Football's* better-looking cousin), you can hide your plays from your opponent in the two-player mode. To do this, simply double tap 4 while at the play selection screen. The highlighting icon will disappear and to choose a play count the number and direction of moves from your original starting position, then select your play like normal.

Just double tap ↑ at the play selection screen and you'll make the highlighting icon disappear so your opponent won't get the scoop on the play your calling. This only works in a two player or multi-player game.

Gekido

Hidden Options

We've come across a couple more cheats since our strategy for *Gekido* a few issues ago that will drastically change the appearance of the characters in the game. To be able to enter these two new cheats for *Gekido*, you're first going to have to play the game normally and get a high score, which isn't very tough, since all you need is to beat 4000 points. It should take you five minutes or less. Then once you die, do not continue and, at the High Score screen, enter one of the following as a name. Once a cheat has been entered, you can turn its effect on and off from the Options Menu and save it to a memory card.



It's not that tough to get a high score and being able to enter a cheat as your name makes it just that much more rewarding.

Cheat	Effect
Deform Mode	DEFORMANIA
	BONECRACK

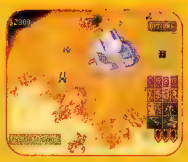
If you don't mind a lot of polygon clipping then enter the Deform Mode cheat at the High-score screen.

In Skeleton Mode every character including the one you're controlling will become a skeleton. This can at times get to be a little confusing.

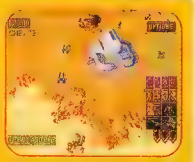
Dune 2000

Reveal Full Map

One way to keep the enemy from sneaking up on you while playing *Dune 2000* is to enter the following cheat which will unlock the full map for a level right from the start of the game. Once a map is completely visible, you'll be able to scope out all the enemies positions, as well as locate all the good spice deposits. To enter the Full Map cheat, start a level and then press △ to access the sidebar on the right hand side of the screen. Once there, highlight the □ ○ X △ △ and □ symbols on the sidebar and press the X button on the controller while on each one in the order listed. When entered correctly, the word Cheater! will appear on screen and the complete map will be completely uncovered



Enter the cheat using the g i p and X buttons in the sidebar and not the buttons on your controller. The only button you use on your controller is X, which you press while highlighting each of the symbols in the sidebar in the correct order.



Once the cheat is entered you should get message declaring you a cheater and he entire map will be yours to peruse.

Street Fighter EX2 Plus

Got Your Street Fighter Cheats Right Here

As usual with a Street Fighter title, there are secrets to uncover and hidden cheats to try within *Street Fighter EX2 Plus*. We're sure that there are more out there, but for now we've been able to get the following two cheats to work.

Vs. Bison II Bonus Game

The first cheat unlocks a hidden bonus game where you have to fight the second version of Bison that you meet at the end of the game. The game basically consists of you picking a character and then trying to last as long as you can against the fearsome Bison. To unlock the Vs. Bison II game, go to the Main Menu and highlight the Bonus Game option. Now press SELECT X ✦ ✦ ✦ SELECT X ✦ ✦ SELECT X ✦ ✦. When done correctly, a message will appear. To play the Vs. Bison II bonus game, just select it from the Bonus Game screen.

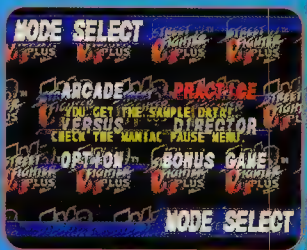
Enter the code at the Main Menu and be sure to highlight the Bonus Game option before you start.

Once you enter the cheat find the new game in the Bonus Game menu.

In the Vs. Bison II it's you against a really powerful version Bison. You basically have to last as long as possible for a score, a fun diversion from the regular game.

Samples in Maniac Mode

This cheat is actually pretty useless until you unlock the Maniac Mode and unfortunately, we haven't come across a good code to open it. We are tracking it down, so you can open the mode in the mean time by playing the game. Simply complete Bison's combo set in the Practice Mode. Once you get Maniac Mode unlocked, all you have to do to be able to use samples in the mode is to highlight Practice at the Main Menu and press SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT ✦ SELECT.



When you enter the code correctly this message will be displayed but to actually play using the samples in Maniac Mode you have to unlock the Maniac Mode.

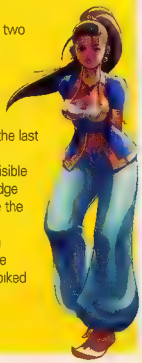
Alundra 2
All The Puzzle Pieces

Hidden throughout *Alundra 2* are puzzle pieces, 60 of them to be exact. There are some to find in just about every level and mini-game and it can be quite the chore to collect them all. Thankfully we've been able to put together the following lists of where each one can be found. The first list shows how many puzzle pieces there are in each area and the second list details their exact locations.

Area	Puzzle Pieces
Mt Sparrowhawk	1
Bombed Paco Village	1
Kindra Forest	3
Tortuga Beach	1
Toroledo	4
Ox Tank	5
Howling Cave	1
Dun Webb	4
Yagin Harbour	1
Puerto Medusa	4
Milenas Mansion	4
Gwaba Town	5
Seagull Ruins	5
Eden	1
Eden Ruins	5
Paco Village Ruins	1
Church Of The Key	3
Turnkey Dam	1
Mount Fiedrake	1
Dragonia	3
Varuna Ruins	3
Star Key	3

Exact Location of Puzzle Pieces

1. Kindra Forest along the path Prunewell came from
2. Mt Sparrowhawk Alexia gives you one
3. Paco Village Bombed explore the debris
4. Tortuga Beach along the wooden veranda
5. Toroledo from the Cow Princess
6. Toroledo in the back of the Inn
7. Toroledo by Lord Jeehans shrine
8. Ox Tank in piston room
9. Ox tank in the upper level with the flame throwing Mephistoids
10. Ox Tank in the bushes outside
11. Dun Webb over the pit by the first save point
12. Dun Webb conveyor belt room
13. Dun Webb in the elevator shaft behind the green door
14. Puerto Medusa Gold Badge Testing Center first room
15. Puerto Medusa " next room
16. Milenas Mansion in the garden shed
17. Milenas Mansion two rooms past the Knokodile
18. Milenas Mansion on the balcony
19. Gwaba Town next door to the store's second floor
20. Gwaba Town in Joses House
21. Gwaba Town in Linda's House
22. Puerto Medusa in the Catch The Falling Vase mini game
23. Seagull Ruins solve the fireball launching blue statue puzzle
24. Seagull Ruins in the dungeon with the statue on your head puzzle
25. Seagull Ruins shoot the four invisible lanterns
26. Seagull Ruins in large room with block and bomb puzzle
27. Eden Village in the shed on the island
28. Eden Ruins in dungeon with gold statue and spikes on same platform
29. Eden Ruins next room down in the pit
30. Eden Ruins in the pit drop down from L shaped walkway
31. Eden Ruins in the pit next to the grapes by the gold statue and the crystal puzzle
32. Eden Ruins in the gold statue maze
33. Paco Village behind the doorway on the hill
34. Dog Mini Game behind gold statue
35. RC Car Mini Game in circuit A
36. Gwaba Town in the town hall behind two gold statues
37. Church Of The Key under gold statue
38. Church Of The Key under stone statue in the lava river
39. Church Of The Key on a ledge by the trees
40. Mt Firedrake by telepads in a dead end
41. Dragonia in the invisible sentries room
42. Dragonia on the high platform after bomb block corridor
43. Dragonia in the flame thrower puzzle room on the ledge
44. Gwaba Town in Sues House use all your rings here
45. Toroledo in the Bull Waiting area shoot lantern
46. Yagin Harbour in the Inn light the lantern
47. Ox Tank burn the trees down
48. Ox tank shoot the three green crystals
49. OxTank shoot invisible block under the large cannonball
50. Dun Webb enter the top door outside by the rolling balls
51. Seagull Ruins jump down in the pit and light the six lanterns. The pit is located to the far right in a room with gold statues and spinning sentries.
52. Turnkey Dam a Puzzle Piece is hidden behind the entrance
53. Puerto Medusa Gold Badge Testing Center inside a gold statue
54. Milenas Mansion light the unlit lantern in the bed room
55. Varuna Ruins in room with two green statues and line of torches
56. Varuna Ruins in the room where the chests keep falling down when you kill the creatures it's the last chest to fall down
57. Varuna Ruins past the invisible spinning blades on the ledge
58. Star Key south door solve the four switch puzzle
59. Star Key in the room with bomb throwers and statue
60. Star Key jump over the spiked platform from the ladder



rip lines

Need help on a game? Then call the people who made it. For your convenience, we've gathered the following list of tip lines for PlayStation game publishers. Most of the numbers are 900 toll calls, so be warned—they will cost you. If you are under 18, you should get permission from whoever pays the phone bill before calling. Also, we don't maintain any of these lines (other than our own), so we aren't responsible for the information available on them.

Acclaim	(516) 759-7800
Accolade	(900) 454-HINT
Activision	(900) 680-HINT
American Technos	(408) 453-9828
ASC Games	(203) 655-0032
Ascii	(900) 288-2724
Atlus Software	(714) 852-2351
Bandai	(310) 926-0947
Capcom	(900) 680-2583
Crystal Dynamics	(900) 737-4767
Data East	(900) 454-5435
Eidos	(900) 773-4367
Electronic Arts	(900) 288-4468
Fox Interactive	(900) 225-5436
GT Interactive	(970) 522-1797
Hot-B	(415) 568-9501
Interplay	(714) 553-6655
Jaleco	(847) 215-1811
KOEI	(415) 348-0500
Kokopeli	(900) 370-HINT
Konami	(900) 896-4468
Lucas Arts	(900) 740-JEDI
Maxis	(510) 933-5630
Microprose	(900) 773-HINT
Midway/Williams	(903) 874-5092
Mindscape	(900) 737-4468
Namco	(900) 737-2262
Ocean	(408) 289-1200
Playmates	(714) 428-2112
Psygnosis	(900) 976-4468
Ready Soft	(905) 475-4801
Sony CEA	(900) 933-7669
Sierra	(900) 370-5583
Spectrum Holobyte	(800)695-GAME
Square Soft	(900)407-KLUE
Strategic Simulations	(408) 737-6800
Technos	(408) 453-9828
Tecmo	(310) 787-2900
THQ	(900) 370-HINT
Time Warner	(408) 473-9495
Trimark	(310) 392-3243
Ubi Soft	(800)UBI-SOFT
Viacom	(303) 739-4019
Virgin	(900) 288-4744

game shark codes

CAESAR'S PALACE 2000

Lots Of Cash 800c7254 03e7
800c7256 03e7
800c7258 03e7

EXCALIBUR 2555 A.D.

Press R1+L1 to Skip level d0089e5af3ff
8007305c0003
Infinite Health-Level 1 ..... d008f4d00001
801222e81000
Infinite Health-Level 2 ..... d008f4d00002
801326881000
Infinite Health-Level 3 ..... d008f4d00003
80125b981000
Infinite Health-Level 4 ..... d008f4d00004
801252501000
Infinite Health-Level 5 ..... d008f4d00005
801115781000
Infinite Health-Level 6 ..... d008f4d00006
801254501000
Infinite Health-Level 7 ..... d008f4d00007
80123a081000
Infinite Health-Level 8 ..... d008f4d00008
801160b81000
Infinite Health-Level 9 ..... d008f4d00009
80110abc1000
Infinite Health-Level 10 ..... d008f4d0000a
8012d9441000
Infinite Health-Level 11 ..... d008f4d0000b
801323ec1000
Infinite Health-Level 12 ..... d008f4d0000c
80120f5c1000
Infinite Health-Level 13 ..... d008f4d0000d
800E1f801000

JUMPING FLASH 2

L1 + R1 To Enable Extra AI d004ba4effef
80187c640006
d004ba4effef
801822f00001
d004ba4effef
801eb6ea0003
d004ba4effef
801eb6ec0004
d004ba4effef
801eb6ee0002
d004ba4effef
801eb6f00005
d004ba4effef
801eb6f20001
d004ba4effef
80187c640006
d004ba4effef
801822f00001
d004ba4effef
801eb6ea0003
d004ba4effef
801eb6ec0004
d004ba4effef
801eb6ee0002
d004ba4effef
801eb6f00005
d004ba4effef
801eb6f20001
Start On Level 1-2 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0001
Start On Level 1-3 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0002
Start On Level 2-1 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0003
Start On Level 2-2 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0004
Start On Level 2-3 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0005
Start On Level 3-1 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0006
Start On Level 3-2 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0007
Start On Level 3-3 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0008
Start On Level 4-1 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0009
Start On Level 4-2 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c000a
Start On Level 4-3 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c000b
Start On Level 5-1 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c000c
Start On Level 5-2 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c000d
Start On Level 5-3 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c000e
Start On Level 6-1 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c000f
Start On Level 6-2 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0010
Start On Level 6-3 ..... d001534c0000
8001534c0011
Play Only Boss Levels d001534c0000
8001534c0002
d001534c0003
8001534c0005
d001534c0006
8001534c0008
d001534c0009
8001534c000b
d001534c000c
8001534c000e
d301534c000f
8001534c0011
1 Hit Kills Level 1-3 Boss d0115e4c1770
80115e4c0001
1 Hit Kills Level 2-3 Boss d0117eb02710
80117eb00001
1 Hit Kills Level 3-3 Boss d010b29c2710
8010b29c0001
d011ca342710
8011ca340001
1 Hit Kills Level 4-3 Boss d011ee982710
8011ee980001
1 Hit Kills Level 5-3 Boss d0126d041b58
80126d040001
d01273f81b58
801273f80000
1 Hit Kills Level 6-3 Boss d01292fc4e20
801292fc0001

COVERT OPS: NUCLEAR DAWN

Infinite Health 800104021000
Vulcan Cannon Never Overheats d01643340000
801643341000
Infinite Ammo Handgun e001045d002c
3001045c00ff
e001045f002c
3001045e00ff
e0010461002c
3001046000ff
e0010463002c
3001046200ff
e0010465002c
3001046400ff
e0010467002c
3001046600ff
e0010469002c
3001046800ff
e001046b002c
3001046a00ff
Infinite Handgun + Long Magazine ..e001045d0030
3001045c00ff
e001045f0030
3001045e00ff
e0010461030
3001046000ff
e0010463030
3001046200ff
e0010465030
3001046400ff
e0010467030
3001046600ff
e0010469030
3001046800ff
e001046b0030
3001046a00ff
Infinite Ammo Machine Gun e001045d0031
3001045c00ff
e001045f0031
3001045e00ff
e0010461031
3001046000ff
e0010463031
3001046200ff
e0010465031
3001046400ff
e0010467031
3001046600ff
e0010469031
3001046800ff
e001046b0031
3001046a00ff
Infinite Ammo Assault Rifle e0010469035
3001046800ff
Infinite Rifle (Modified) e0010469037
3001046800ff
Infinite Rifle + Scope e0010469038
3001046800ff
Infinite Rifle + Scope (Modified) e001046903a
3001046800ff
Infinite Ammo Grenade Launcher e0010469036
3001046800ff
Infinite Ammo Launcher + Scope e0010469039
3001046800ff

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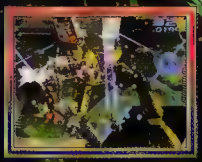

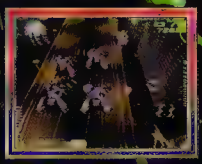

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LETTERS

welcome to the premier forum for playstation fans, where we dig into today's hottest issues

Drop us a line at PSM Letters, care of Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA, 94005. Or even better, if you have access to e-mail, you can reach us at psm@imaginemedia.com.

▲ Only Bill saw the strange, sinister spacecraft as it dropped out of warp...

With all this talk about the new PS2, the only thing that I can think about is the Bleemcast for Sega. That's right! I don't give a damn about the over-hyped PS2. What's really going to change the gaming world is the Bleemcast. And I really find it hard to believe that any gaming publication hasn't picked up on the significance of this. So let me spell it out. First of all, I've been a loyal Playstation owner for years and I have some great memories playing games on my Playstation. But let's face it, after years on the same console, it comes time to move on. So when the PS2 was announced, I was ecstatic. It was more of what I loved, but with next generation graphics. In fact, I read so many articles gushing over this amazing new machine that I began to grow tired of my old PlayStation. It's the same kind of thing that gamers go through every few years when all the next generation consoles come out. We're forced to compare our beloved, dusty old console to these new and improved systems. And over time, with much hesitation, we put aside our old games to embrace the new generation of games.

But wait, PS2 has backwards compatibility! So anytime I want to play my PlayStation games, I can, right? Wrong. The backwards compatibility thing seemed great at first, but when you think about it's really pointless. Next generation games create next generation gamers. After spending hours playing 128 bit games, do I really want to pop in my 32 bit game? As much as I love my old games, I can't bear to play them anymore. The same will be true for my PlayStation. New games bring new expectations and change our tastes. It's already happening to me. After playing the Dreamcast and the new arcade games, I'm starting to find my PlayStation games ugly. Which brings me back to the Bleemcast.

The Bleemcast is a gamer's dream. For the first time in history, I can play my old games on a different console with next generation graphics. The thought alone makes me all misty eyed. Imagine playing *Tekken 3* or *Gran Turismo 2* or any other game that you love and cherish as a brand new game. Well, not completely brand new, but with graphics far better than when you played them before. This concept is astonishing. With Bleemcast, my old PlayStation games now have new value. And let's not forget that I can pick up all those PlayStation games that I've been meaning to buy (many being only 20 dollars) and play them like they were PS2 games.

▲ While attractively packaged, bleem! is still no substitute for a PS2. Sorry, Prosel.

When the Bleemcast was announced, I realized that as a loyal PlayStation owner, I had been gypped. Sony fed me so much hype, that I didn't see it before.

Sure, they offered backwards compatibility, but why not improved graphics? I assumed that it just wasn't possible. I figured backwards compatibility was as good as it gets. Then all of the sudden, Bleem makes it possible to play Sony PlayStation games on a Sega Dreamcast with improved textures and graphics! After all, Bleem is an outside company and they made it possible. Why couldn't Sony make it possible for their own systems? Before I felt crazy with anticipation for the PS2. Now I say screw Sony and their damn 300 dollar PS2. They've let me and all other PlayStation owners down. And soon, more and more of us will begin to see this. When the PS2 are sold out, myself and others will be playing the Dreamcast with our old PlayStation games with an extra hundred dollars in our pocket. Sony had better take notice to the implications of Bleem's release. Think about the average gamer. Do they really want to drop over 400 dollars for the PS2 (including games and another controller) when they can buy a Dreamcast for 200 dollars (with a 200 dollar online rebate) and have the ability to play 20 PlayStation dollar games with PS2 graphics? Hey and let's not forget PS2's problems with anti-aliasing.

I've seen Bleem's images of *Ridge Racer IV* on the Dreamcast and I didn't notice any jaggies. The same can't be said for any of PS2's games. The same way that next generation consoles change our expectations of games, Bleem will change our expectations of a next generation console. Unless Sony can come up with a program similar to Bleem for its PS2 (and fix those damn jaggies) then they will lose many PlayStation loyalists to Sega.

Proset Frazee
PKFrazee@aol.com

LINK-UP

Wanna hook up with other gamers from around the world? Drop us a postcard with your name, address, favorite genre, your current fave games, and your age. Send it to PSM Link-Up, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Or, you can e-mail us at psm@imaginemedia.com.

Bo G. age: 15
1001Hillman@hotmail.com
Favorite Genres: RPG, Sports, Racing
Favorite Games: Chrono Cross, Final Fantasy VIII, Resident Evil, Chrono Trigger, Tekken 3, Metal Gear Solid, Dino Crisis, and Castlevania SOTN
Quote: "I like to play video games."

Jason Vega, age: 19
Oldskoolgamer@worldnet.att.net
Favorite Genres: RPG, fighting, action, and racing games
Favorite Games: FF7, FF8, MGS, Parasite Eve, Zelda: link to the past, Crazy Taxi, and Wipeout XL
Quote: "I'm looking for a hardcore and gamer, where are you?

Katelin Mitchell, age: 11
Silhouet9@aol.com
Favorite Genres: survival, horror, adventure, sports, action
Favorite Games: *Metal Gear Solid, Legend of Zelda, Tekken, Final Fantasy 8, Twisted Metal 2, Dino Crisis, Castlevania SOTN*

(Continued on pg. 98)

Pause

Each month, we put the controller down for a moment to focus on a different aspect of PlayStation gaming. We invite debate, so please drop us your opinion on this month's topic at PSM PAUSE, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Or, you can e-mail us at psm@imaginemedia.com (just be sure to put "Pause" as the subject heading). We will run the best of your responses here in this section.

This Month's Topic:

Would we be better off with just one system?

Look at posts on the 'net, and you'll find countless debates over which videogame system is "The Best". It seems like everyone has a single favorite system (usually the one they own), and for a lot of people, that system can do no wrong. Very few people online appear to be truly free of any bias, and every one has their own opinion on what Sony, Sega, Nintendo and Microsoft are doing right and wrong.

So, that got me thinking about this month's Pause question: Would we be better off with a single, unified videogame format? One system that plays all of the games? Before you answer, consider the benefits and negatives of both sides.

If there was just one console, every developer would know exactly what to program for, and they could really focus on pushing that hardware to its limits. Gamers would only have to buy a single system and they could play any game they want. Just think, you could play Zelda, Metal Gear, and Sonic for the price of just one console. Plus, there'd be a lot less bickering over "who's the best".

> "There's no more dramatic story-line than the rise and fall of hardware companies"

On the other hand, competition can be a very good thing. Without different hardware manufacturers pushing each other, would we see everyone's best possible effort? Would Nintendo still put out Triple-A games like Mario and Zelda if they didn't need them to sell hardware? And, can't it be argued that there is an inherent excitement in not knowing which system will be number-one? In our industry, there's no more dramatic storyline than the rise and fall of hardware companies.

What other advantages and disadvantages of having a single platform can you think of? Which way do YOU think would ultimately be the best? Please send me your thoughts at the addresses above, and I'll print as many of your responses as I can fit in. Please try to be brief, and remember to include your name!

► Chris Slate

Console Render: Randall Ng

Pause Feedback: July
What do you think of the E3 show?

Here are your responses to our Pause topic for issue 35 (July, 2000). It was tough trimming down the tremendous amount of letters we received to the few that follow, so we tried to pick ones that took a slightly different angle to the subject. Now let's see what you had to say...

From what I could gather, Sega had the better "show". However, what happens when you take away all the bells and whistles? Sega's booth would have been about as flat as two-month old root beer. Sony unquestionably had the better games. Just look:

1. The PlayStation AND the PS2 were being shown. The longest surviving console and the most anticipated console make for a deadly team in my opinion.

2. For a good while, Sega will be the only competition Sony has, and PS2's first-generation titles look just like Dreamcast to the tenth power.

3. With games like *Soul Reaver 2, Tekken Tag, Madden, Fusion GT, Motor Mayhem, Oni, Bouncer, GT 2000*, and (gasp) the greatest game ever seen in the history of the world, *Metal Gear Solid 2*! Oh no! Hideo breaks out the *Metal Gear!* Stop the match!

All in all, E3 was everything I'd hoped for and then some. Hell, Sony could launch the Playstation 2 with *Tekken Tag* and *GT 2000*, and it would sell faster than half-priced *Pokemon* cards on a Saturday. Not to mention that Sega had, like, two anticipated games, Nintendo hasn't even shown what its system looks like, and nobody knows crap about the X-Box. Basically, if Sony just follows through with what was seen at E3, they're sittin' pretty right now.

Don Roberts
DON_28011@email.msn.com

E3 in my opinion was the most exciting one to date! The PS2 was in full force with a fantastic lineup of games, and the Dreamcast was showing that it's still the little box that can, and it will be interesting to see how Sega remains in the game once Nintendo and Microsoft enter into it. PlayStation had a few good games, but I could care less about the PS1 at the moment. Nintendo, on the other hand, had a few good titles as well. Can you imagine what next year's E3 will be like, since by then you will have everybody's console in the game? The new Millennium is just beginning for the videogame industry!

Cody Maverick
cody_maverick@hotmail.com

I'm a longtime gamer, and through the years I've seen various mags cover E3. The show always has a few games that catch my eye, but this year takes the cake. I was absolutely stunned by the multitude and quality of the games. With titles like *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* and *Tony Hawk 2*, you can't go wrong. I seriously think that *MGS2* will be the best game ever and that they had so many shots of it was amazing. I think that Sony and all the other game companies will be hard pressed to top this year. The buzz behind PS2 just adds to the atmosphere of a great gaming year to come! WHOOOPEEE!

Mark Graibus
(email withheld by request)

Sony was absolutely destroyed by Sega at E3. No matter how many units PS2 has sold in Japan in its first four months, that doesn't change the fact that the line-up of software is lackluster, and that's putting it nicely. While the console may have two games from Namco that are above average (but don't match Namco's or Sega's attempts on Dreamcast), two games don't make a console.

As for E3, the games shown were either those lackluster titles which were already available in Japan (i.e. *Eternal Ring, Evergrace, Driving Emotion Type-S*, et al) were playable. The only games that were looking half-way decent were *The Bouncer* (which still hasn't been shown in "playable" form, and I use the term loosely), *MGS2: Sons of Liberty* (which is due out in about 18 months), and *Dark Cloud*. As to how they'll play, or if they'll even look as good as they did (::coughs MGS2 coughs::) is yet to be seen. However, Sega had a booth filled with games that weren't just SEQUELS, but were actually somewhat original.

I'm sure PS2 will come into its own a few days down the road, as did the PS after a few initial bumps, but to blatantly lie about Sony dominating E3 is just plain wrong.

Soul4ger
Soul4ger@aol.com

► **CHRIS: Let's look at PS2's launch lineup. You've got great original titles like *SSX, Time Splitters*, and *Silent Scope*. There are a few other good-looking titles in the pack as well, and yeah, a few duds, too. But overall I really believe this will be one of the best launch lineups ever.**

As for Sega, I agree with most of you that they did a tremendous job in presenting their lineup. Overall they've got a lot of decent software, but not a single game that I'd have to run out and buy a Dreamcast to play.

I DO think that Sony has a fight on its hands. However, it's a fight that they're poised to win. If anyone's going to take 'em out, it will take a MASSIVE effort and a little bit of luck. That's just common sense.

(Continued from pg. 96)

RANDY: You're right — next-generation games do make next-generation gamers... and PS2 will have true next-gen games aplenty. And with the likes of *Dark Cloud, GT2000,* or *Metal Gear Solid 2* to look forward to, no one can tell me that they're going to be popping in their old PS1 that often. People are primarily going to buy PS2s to play new games, not re-visit their old ones, though it will be nice to be able to play all of your game library on one machine should you choose. Not to mention the support for all of your existing peripherals.

Sure, the idea that Bleemcast will enhance the visuals of your old PlayStation games (well, at least the ones it supports) is great, but it's not going to magically infuse them with next-generation gameplay. They'll look dramatically better, but they won't play any different — and that's the real promise of PS2 games. In the end, they'll be the same old games you've undoubtedly played through more than once, and how many times can you keep playing the same game (even the likes of *Metal Gear Solid*) with higher-res graphics, especially when there are new PS2 games that blow your old stuff out of the water in terms of the actual gameplay experience? You can't tell me that you're going to take a spruced-up *MGS* over the tremendous gameplay innovations offered by *MGS2*, no matter how good the original game was (and still is).

▲ **Dreamcast has *Seaman*, a game featuring voice recognition. PlayStation doesn't have anything like that currently.**

As for Bleemcast making PS1 games look as good as PS2 games, you must've been looking at the wrong PS2 games. Trust me, when you see games like *Madden, SSX,* or pretty much any of the US-developed launch games running, **you won't be able to say that they look like enhanced PS1 games — or in these two instances, Dreamcast games. Oh, and about the whole debate surrounding PS2's supposed "shortcomings," I just got done seeing a US launch game that features fully implemented anti-aliasing and utilizes 10MB of textures per frame by swapping between system memory and the Graphic Synthesizer's on-die cache. That's two myths dispelled, thank goodness.**

First I would like to say that your magazine rocks!And I have a couple questions to ask

1. You said that some accessories for the regular PlayStation would work on the PS2. Will you be able to use the regular PS converter so you could play old japan titles on the PS2?

2. In one issue, you mentioned a headset for the PS2 which you would communicate with the game through. Does it really exist and if so, are there any titles lined up that would be compatible with it?

Collin Tarr
ckt_ckt@hotmail.com

STEVE: Hey, Collin. How's everything on your side of the world? Excitement is building here in the PSM offices, since the PS2 launch is ever so close. There's only a few

Illustration: Ale Garza, Colors: Avalon Studios

Hey guys! I just got my July issue of PSM and had a couple comments that I thought I'd share.

First, I'm a hardcore gamer, and I'm a girl (although a tomboy). I'm actually heading into a career in the videogame industry. I'm not a feminist or a girl who insists on spelling "girl" as "grrl", but the "Swimsuit Special" irked me. I know that I'm a minority in the gaming universe, but it's a bit annoying to see people like me ruled out completely. Although it was nice to read the little passages on the side of each picture and see how well the girls are respected, how many people will go to that section for that purpose? It's like the popular excuse of "reading Playboy for the articles". I'm not saying to make a swimsuit special starring the guys in videogames, but it'd be nice to have something that shows a little recognition to the girl gamers out there. I'm tired of all the other magazines out there who seem to think that the only games girls like are games like Hello Kitty's puzzle game, the Spice Girls game, or anything pink and related to Barbie. I know I'm not the only one who feels this way, and I know that it's every guy gamer's dream to have a girlfriend who doesn't scoff at him when he goes to stand in line a day in advance for a new system or shell out $50 for a new game (but I'm taken).

By the way, is there any light of hope that PS2 games will have the option of having the original Japanese voices? I H-A-T-E dubbed over voices with a passion and I refuse to buy any game that has it. Luckily, I'm Japanese, so I can understand the original dialogue from import games. Even subtitles would be good. Since most anime DVDs has both language options, isn't it possible for games to do this too?
Rumi Ohnui
megami@anime-goddess.com

CHRIS: Well, we tried to throw a couple of guys in the Swimsuit Feature, but we have to be realistic. As much as we value and respect our female readers, they only make up roughly 3% of our audience — hunks in trunks is the LAST thing the other 97% wants to see. So, please don't feel like we're ignoring you or not respecting girl gamers — we're just trying to please the majority of our audience!

As for games keeping the original Japanese dialogue, I don't think it will happen. I wish it would, and with the added space available on a PS2 DVD, it's possible — I just don't see US publishing houses going for it. I hope I'm proven wrong!

Name: Moody, age: 20
e-mail: xwielder@yahoo.com
Favorite Genres: fighting,sports and Action or Adventure games.
Favorite Games: *Metal Gear Solid, Madden 2000, Strikeforce* and all Capcom games.
Quote: "Can't forget the Dual Shock!"

Name: Raul Nieves Jr., age: 16
Address: 4230 Carnegie Ave Bronx NY 10470 and 2
Favorite Genres: FIGHTING, RPGs, adventure, shooters
Favorite Games: *Final Fantasy 7& 8, Dragonball Z Legends & Final Bout ALL MEGAMAN games, Perfect Dark, MARVEL VS CAPCOM 1&2, Final Shoots, Xenogears, Zelda 64, POKEMON, Wrestlemania 2000, Quake-type, Tony Hawks Pro Skate*
Quote: "Games > movies. DIE than fuse with me."

Name: Craig Bowen, age: 15
Address: BlazinCraig420@hotmail.com
Favorite Genres: Sports, Action/Adventure, Racing
Favorite Games: *Tony Hawk 1+2, Resident Evil 1+2+3, Tomb Raiden 1+2, Final Fantasy series, WWF SmackDown! Metal Gear Solid, Chin Turismo series, Tekken series, Spinner, Elite, Street Fighter series, and so many more!*
Quote: "I'm gonna get you high today! Smokey from Endex"

Name: Seth Garcia, age: 16
Address: hero_infinity@hotmail.com
Favorite Genres: RPG, Strategy, Action
Favorite Games: *FF6, FF7, Final Fantasy Tactics, Suikoden, Metal Gear, Solid, Chrono Trigger*
Quote: "You're strange. You're different from us."

Name: Aaron Frase, age: 13
Address: aaron_frase@yahoo.com
Favorite Genres: RPG, Adventure, Platform, Car combat, Fighting
Favorite Games: *Metal Gear Solid, Metal Gear Solid VR missions, Brave Fencer Musahiden, FF7, Ape Escape, Tony Hawks pro skater, R2J, Saga Frontier, Street*
(Continued on pg. 106)

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Within the millions of lines of codes that make up your favorite games, there exist variables and vulnerabilities. GameShark™ parts the sea, opening the path to domination by granting you previously unobtainable powers and abilities. Live forever. Pack a full arsenal. Go anywhere, do anything and destroy everything. Hell, even walk on water... Sound familiar?

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more months left until U.S. gamers get their hands on the super-console.

1. What converter are you referring to? Are you talking about the one that plugs into the serial I/O port on the back of the PlayStation? If so, then no. The PS2 has no such port. That's why older GameSharks won't work either.

2. Speech recognition is something that Sony is still working on, but I expect to see games take advantage of that technology around 2002. I'm sure that a headset of some sort will be released around that time, too. Perhaps a game like *Seaman* will be released even sooner than that.

▲ Craig is wondering when someone is gonna be able to play *The Bouncer*, and so are we!

Hey PSM Crew, first I wanted to say your mag is the best out on the market... I can't wait to see you all handle an entire magazine devoted to the awesome PS2! It's hard to believe it's only a few more months until I'm playing *Madden 2K1*, *GT2000*, and *Dark Cloud* in my very own home! Anyways, on with the questions...

1. I've noticed on the PSM Online website that the reviews are handled on a 10-point scale, as are the PS2 reviews in the May issue. Are you all considering switching all reviews over to a 10-star scale? If I were working at PSM, I'd probably want to change over from 5 to 10.

2. In *MGS2*, which is my #1 wanted game by the way, will Snake grow a beard and longer hair? Or will he keep his clean shaven look through the whole game? If he grew his hair, it would add to the realism so much. Also, when is the projected release date of *MGS2* in the U.S.?

3. When is Square/EA gonna let some people play *The Bouncer*? Every time I look in a mag it says "Shown only in non-playable form." What's the deal?

4. Last, but not least, don't you think Sony should get their ass in gear and start suing bleem! again for the BleemCast? In case you didn't know, it allows DC owners to play PSX games on their console! With enhanced graphics! This isn't fair!

Thanks a lot for your time, and for looking at my Q's.. peace!

Craig Bowen
BlazinCraig420@hotmail.com

►CHRIS: 1. Y'know, we haven't really got our online reviews going yet, so what you're seeing there is just the template that all Imagine magazines use for their website reviews. However, I would say that there is a better-than-average chance that you will be seeing us switch to a 10 scale in the mag, sooner rather than later.

2. He won't be growing his hair (after all, the story in the game doesn't cover that much time), but if you look at the new screens, you can see that his hair is already much longer than in the first game (he's not clean-shaven, either). The US release is targeted for Fall of next year.

3. Supposedly, that game is kind of being developed backwards. The story bits have been done for awhile, but the gameplay is still being tweaked. We're hoping it will be out this year, but we aren't holding our breath.

4. Sony is still after those BleemCast guys, so that whole thing is far from being settled. Speaking solely from a gamer's perspective though, why wouldn't you want BleemCast to hit the market? I don't have a problem with playing super-enhanced versions of PS games on Dreamcast.

Wow, you guys are really reading this! Let me start off by saying that I'm from the Netherlands, so don't be surprised if my English isn't so great. Anyways, I'm not going to tell you what a great mag you have, since everybody does that. I just have some questions (Oh God, no, that's what everybody does too...)

1. I've heard that some PS1 games (such as *FF8*) are not playable on PS2. Can't you guys just place a list or something in your mag, showing what and what doesn't work ?

2. In your June issue, you previewed *The Day of Walpurgis*. Well, in your review, there was a Dutch word, namely Walpurgis nacht, which translates into Walpurgis NIGHT here in Holland! What's up with that?

3. Can you guys name me a Capcom fighter which stars both Omega Red and Venom ? A match between these favorites of mine would be great!

Ben Geerdink
obsid'an@marvelzombie.com

►STEVE: That's right, Ben. We are reading your letter. Not only that, but we're answering it too. Thanks for taking the time to write in.

1. Pretty much every PlayStation title can be played on the PS2. There are a few exceptions, but not that many. As soon as Sony provides us with a complete list of incompatible games, we'll run it. As for *FFVIII*, it plays fine on the PS2. You just can't use the faster loading feature when playing it.

2. Yeah, we know that it translates into Walpurgis Night, but Konami has decided to call the game *"The Day of Walpurgis"*. That's why we wrote it like that.

3. I don't think there is a game that stars both of those characters. Maybe *Marvel vs. Capcom 3* will feature the two villains. Who knows?

I have a bunch of questions about the PS1 & PS2. Here you go:

1. I thought of something that sucks on PS2. Let's say you are in the middle, of, say, *Mega Man Legends 2* or *Legend of Dragoon*, and you trade your PlayStation and a bunch of games for a PS2. Here's the sucky thing: you can't continue your game. You would have to start over, because the PS2 isn't compatible with PS1 memory cards. Sucks, huh?

2. Do more coverage on *Armored Core 2* and *Motor Mayhem*, please! These are probably going to be my first PS2 games, and I want to see what you guys think of them.

Mr. Snoogey
Firesnipe@aol.com

►RANDY: You won't have to worry about your first point; the PS2 definitely does support PS1 memory cards, but only when they're used with PS1 games. You just can't use them to save while playing PS2 games. So, you can trade in your PS1 and not worry about having access to your important saves.

About those games, be sure to check out this issue's PS2 section for new coverage on both — although I

Fighter Alpha 3 Choooo? Ha
Quote: AAAARRRGGGHH!
RUMBLE EVERYTHING
Andres Rivas, age: 14
andresrivas28@freewwfweb.com
Favorite Genres: Rpg, Action, Wrestling, Horror
Favorite Games: Fr8, WWF Smackdown, Tekken 3, Metal Gear VR missions
Shane Blackburn, age 14
Favorite Genres: RPG, Fighting, and Sports
Favorite Games: Dragon Ball GT: Final Bout, Dragon Ball Z Ultimate Battle 22, Dragon Ball Z Legendary Love, SSX, NBA on NBC, Final Fantasy Series, Marvel vs. Capcom
Quote: Super Ghost Kamehameha Super Saiyan Gotenks
John Chamberlain, age 16
Favorite Genres: RPG, Shooters, Action Adventure, Platformers
Favorite Games: 3D Baseball, Monopoly, Wheel of Mania, Blues Clues, Tekken 3, Madden 2000, Ms. Pac-Man, Legend of Dragoon, Metal Gear Solid, Ape Escape, Spyro the Dragon, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, Crash Bandicoot: Warped, Ape Escape, Spyro: Year of the Dragon, Everybody's Golf 2, Jet Moto, Gauntlet Legends, Bust-A-Move 4, Bomberman, Syphon Filter, Resident Evil 2, Resident Evil 3: Nemesis, Medal of Honor, Duke Nukem: Time to Kill, Soul Blade, Soul Reaver, Mega Man Legends 2, Mega Man X4, Mega Man X5, Mega Man X6, Mega Man Battle & Chase, Mega Man Neo, Mega Man Soccer, Mega Man 8, Mega Man Pocket Fighter, Mega Man Xtreme, Mega Man Xtreme 2, Mega Man Xtreme 3, Mega Man Xtreme 4, Mega Man Xtreme 5, Mega Man Xtreme 6, Mega Man Xtreme 7, Mega Man Xtreme 8, Mega Man Xtreme 9, Mega Man Xtreme 10, Mega Man Xtreme 11, Mega Man Xtreme 12, Mega Man Xtreme 13, Mega Man Xtreme 14, Mega Man Xtreme 15, Mega Man Xtreme 16, Mega Man Xtreme 17, Mega Man Xtreme 18, Mega Man Xtreme 19, Mega Man Xtreme 20, Mega Man Xtreme 21, Mega Man Xtreme 22, Mega Man Xtreme 23, Mega Man Xtreme 24, Mega Man Xtreme 25, Mega Man Xtreme 26, Mega Man Xtreme 27, Mega Man Xtreme 28, Mega Man Xtreme 29, Mega Man Xtreme 30, Mega Man Xtreme 31, Mega Man Xtreme 32, Mega Man Xtreme 33, Mega Man Xtreme 34, Mega Man Xtreme 35, Mega Man Xtreme 36, Mega Man Xtreme 37, Mega Man Xtreme 38, Mega Man Xtreme 39, Mega Man Xtreme 40, Mega Man Xtreme 41, Mega Man Xtreme 42, Mega Man Xtreme 43, Mega Man Xtreme 44, Mega Man Xtreme 45, Mega Man Xtreme 46, Mega Man Xtreme 47, Mega Man Xtreme 48, Mega Man Xtreme 49, Mega Man Xtreme 50, Mega Man Xtreme 51, Mega Man Xtreme 52, Mega Man Xtreme 53, Mega Man Xtreme 54, Mega Man Xtreme 55, Mega Man Xtreme 56, Mega Man Xtreme 57, Mega Man Xtreme 58, Mega Man Xtreme 59, Mega Man Xtreme 60, Mega Man Xtreme 61, Mega Man Xtreme 62, Mega Man Xtreme 63, Mega Man Xtreme 64, Mega Man Xtreme 65, Mega Man Xtreme 66, Mega Man Xtreme 67, Mega Man Xtreme 68, Mega Man Xtreme 69, Mega Man Xtreme 70, Mega Man Xtreme 71, Mega Man Xtreme 72, Mega Man Xtreme 73, Mega Man Xtreme 74, Mega Man Xtreme 75, Mega Man Xtreme 76, Mega Man Xtreme 77, Mega Man Xtreme 78, Mega Man Xtreme 79, Mega Man Xtreme 80, Mega Man Xtreme 81, Mega Man Xtreme 82, Mega Man Xtreme 83, Mega Man Xtreme 84, Mega Man Xtreme 85, Mega Man Xtreme 86, Mega Man Xtreme 87, Mega Man Xtreme 88, Mega Man Xtreme 89, Mega Man Xtreme 90, Mega Man Xtreme 91, Mega Man Xtreme 92, Mega Man Xtreme 93, Mega Man Xtreme 94, Mega Man Xtreme 95, Mega Man Xtreme 96, Mega Man Xtreme 97, Mega Man Xtreme 98, Mega Man Xtreme 99, Mega Man Xtreme 100
Jesse H...
Address: Knocker46@aol.com
Favorite Genres: RPG, Adventure, Fighting
Favorite Games: Resident Evil series, Final Fantasy series, Tekken 1, Resident Evil
Jerad Dumolt, age: ...
HDK_killer07@yahoo.com
Favorite Genres: RPG, Fighting
Favorite Games: Tekken 3, ...

Fan Art

Welcome to the Fan Art section! Each month we'll be taking a look at the coolest PlayStation fan art from the hottest new talents around. If you've done an illustration that you'd like to see printed here, then by all means send us a copy! (We'll take originals too, but we won't be able to return them). Address it to **PSM Fan Art, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, California 94005** Even better, if you have the art in a high-resolution digital format, e-mail it to us at **psm@imaginemedia.com**, and label the subject heading "Fan Art." Now get busy!

◀ **Pipin Tobing is a rising star in the fan art circle — this guy's incredible!**

▶ **Thanks to Ed Tewasart for sending in this sultry shot of Felicia.**

Joe [illegible] and Eagle Smith out of Chicago sent in this sweet SF piece.

▲ **For more great art from Wes Ison, check out http://pencilpusher.homestead.com/index.html.**

◀ **Tenten turned in this smokin' *Bust-A-Groove* illustration. Nice job!**

▲ **Don't worry, Mr. Snoogey (Mr. Snoogey?), *Motor Mayhem* will be released one of these days. We'll let you know when.**

Hi PSM people, first of all I will thank ya'll for these magazines that you making. I appreciate your hard work and intelligence. I have a question about PS2 before it hits the United States. I have heard that there are a lot of viruses on the internet. And since the PS2 will be able to go online eventually, is there a chance that the PS2 could fall prey to a virus? Is there anyway to avoid them?

Mendee Tsolmon
wu-mend@wu-tang.net

RANDY: You know, I can't turn on the news anymore without hearing about a new computer virus making the rounds. Thankfully, they all primarily target Windows-based computers, and someone would actually have to write a virus designed to attack PS2 specifically for it to do any damage. Plus, you'd really have to be using the PS2 hard disk drive and somehow get the virus onto it (or into memory) for it to cause any damage. Seeing as the PS2 network won't be online for a while, it's not anything to be concerned with near-term, and probably won't be a major concern even in the long term.

1. I simply can't live without knowing if Sony will make a *Legend of Dragoon* two. Please say the rumors are true!

2. What about *Legend of Legaia?* People never give it as much credit as it deserves because are based towards the *FF* series.

3. Is there going to be an *Ape Escape* two? If not, I'm gonna say one word: PPLLEEEZZE!

◀ **Let's not start worrying about viruses until we can get online with our PS2s!**

Wage Master Cole, age 17
RockCole@wetdry.net
Favorite Genres: RPG, Fighting, and Puzzle
Favorite Games: *Vagrant Story, You Don't Know Jack, and RPG Maker*
Quote: "A full clip in every gun, a siren in every floor, and me."

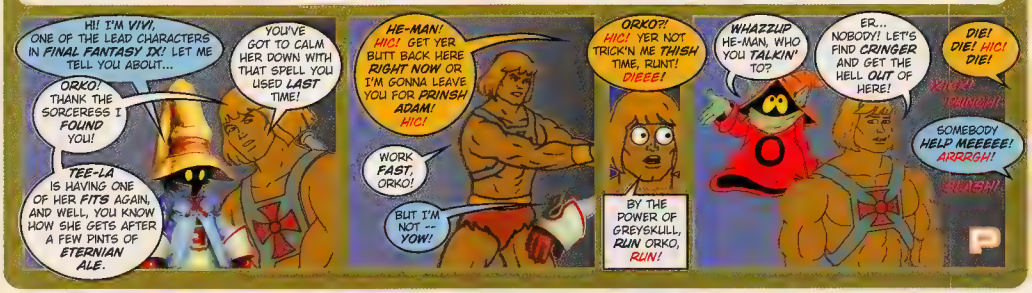
Justin Mann, age 16
RegalsDOG@aol.com
Favorite Genre: Action/Adventure
Favorite Games: *Nascess: Digital Mission VFX 2, Armored Core, Armored Core: Master of Arena, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*
Quote: "Winning leads to advancement, it also means playing me."

[expert]
psyert@coqui.net
Favorite Genres: RPG, Adventure, Action, Survival
Favorite Games: *FF 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, Chrono Trigger & Cross, Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver, Xenogears, Golden Eye, Army Men, Metal Gear Solid & VR Missions*

Cody Maverick, age 15
cody_maverick@hotmail.com
Favorite Genres: ALL
Favorite Games: *Final Fantasy 7&8, Castlevania: SOTN, Legacy of Kain: SR, Resident Evil Series, Castlevania Series, Tekken 2&3, Xenogears, MGS, Oddworld Series, DOOM1&2, Legend of Dragoon, CONTRA 3, Alien Wars, Super Metroid, Super Punchout, Zelda 64, and Sukoden! CAN'T WAIT FOR: Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty BABY!!*
Quote: "Only then can you truly understand the CHILL!" -Kain, Soul Reaver

smart bomb

MISTAKEN IDENTITY


HI! I'M VIVI, ONE OF THE LEAD CHARACTERS IN FINAL FANTASY IX! LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT...
YOU'VE GOT TO CALM HER DOWN WITH THAT SPELL YOU USED LAST TIME!
ORKO! THANK THE SORCERESS I FOUND YOU!
TEE-LA IS HAVING ONE OF HER FITS AGAIN, AND WELL, YOU KNOW HOW SHE GETS AFTER A FEW PINTS OF ETERNIAN ALE.
HE-MAN! HIC! GET YER BUTT BACK HERE RIGHT NOW OR I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU FOR PRINSH ADAM! HIC!
WORK FASTER, ORKO!
BUT I'M NOT -- YOW!
ORKO?! HIC! YER NOT TRICK'N ME THISH TIME, RUNT! DIEEE!
BY THE POWER OF GREYSKULL, RUN ORKO, RUN!
WHAZZUP HE-MAN, WHO YOU TALKIN' TO?
ER... NOBODY! LET'S FIND CRINGER AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!
DIE! DIE! HIC! DIE!
KNEEL PUNCH!
SOMEBODY HELP MEEEEE! ARRRGH!
SLASH!

I have one more thing to say: I kick boys butts in arcade games. But I much prefer RPGs, seeing as I love Medieval times and that I think dragons should rule the world. After all, they can't make more of a mess in it than we have!

Kendal
K_onyx@juno.com

CHRIS: 1. Nothing official on that yet, but I think you can bet on it.

▲ Despite our hands-on look at E3, not much is known about *Dark Cloud*, Adam. It sure looks pretty, though...

2. Sorry, no word on a sequel to *Legaia* yet.

3. It looks good — we know for sure that the *Ape Escape* team is working on a couple of new games that focus on the DualShock controller, and there's a good chance that one of them is a sequel to *Ape Escape*.

I'd like to start off by saying that you guys are the greatest PS magazine in the world! Anyway here are questions relating to the upcoming PS2, the already here PS, and some goofy questions I was just curious about.

1. Will the PS2 support VCDs like they're going to do with DVDs?

2. Can you transfer old memory card data from your old memory card to the new memory cards? If so, how much more space would you have left?

3. Do you guys know what the word *Gekido* actually means?

Charles Labial
chuckmin@hotmail com

STEVE: We love goofy questions... bring 'em on.

1. The PS2 won't support VCDs out of the box. However, that doesn't mean that a company couldn't create an add-on that allows the console to play VCDs. In fact, I'm sure one will.

2. Not really. PlayStation games can't recognize the PS2 memory cards anyway.

3. According to our man in Japan, Max Everingham, *Gekido* means drama. Interesting, isn't it?

Hey guys, your mag has the most in-depth coverage of PS2 I have seen. I love it! First off, what's the situation (or as Gabe Logan would say, the sit rep) on *Dragon Quest VII*? I saw a quick preview of it in several places. Will it hit U.S. shores? Secondly, have you gotten any more news on *Dark Cloud*? It looks to be a promising RPG/god sim, but I haven't seen anything besides your coverage on it. And it is soooooo tempting.....Third, is there a given time for when the Sony Broadband Network will be initiated. I saw how *FFIX* looked, and wondered when online games will come to the PS2

Adam H.
Highland Mills, NY

CHRIS: *DQVII* is definitely coming over, but no date is set (look towards next year). Detailed info is still scarce on *Dark Cloud*, but from what we've seen and played, it will be well worth the wait. It could be out as early as the end of this year. Sony hasn't given any official timeframe regarding their online plans, other than "next year" sometime.

Great mag an' all but I was wondering a little something about how far the console industry is going, especially Sony with the PS2. With all the bells and whistles coming with the Playstation 2 like USB ports for keyboards, mice and digital cameras or the console having a hard drive and an operating system, and not to mention a modem, what's there to distinguish a conso e from an actual PC with a TV Out cable? I think it's great that technology is advancing at such a massive rate but soon enough I think people will wake up and understand that a computer can be upgraded to "get with the time" but a console will just fall back eventually. What do you think about it?

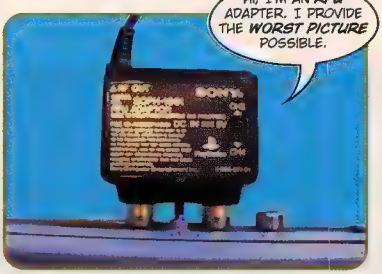
Andres Onu
king@tangmonkey com

RANDY: The fact of the matter is that PS2 (and all consoles, for that matter) is a closed architecture — i.e. they have one set of specifications that never change. This means that developers can spend all their time learning how to take advantage of the hardware and can be certain that their games will work the same on every machine. PCs, on the other hand, are generally all different in one way or another, so developers never have one target to aim for in terms of maximum performance. This means you'll rarely see developers making the most of what the PC has to offer, simply because they want their games to be able to run on the widest variety of systems possible.

I reserved a PS2 and my T.V. doesn't have an AV connection. Will they make an RFU adapter or will I have to buy a new T.V.?

Frank brummerhop
brumhop@bellsouth.net

STEVE: In a word, yes. There will be an RFU adapter for the PlayStation 2.



▲ Since Sony had an RFU adapter available for the original PlayStation, there's no reason to believe that it won't do the same for the PlayStation 2.

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RESET

Coming next month in issue 38 of PSM

PS2 PRE-LAUNCH SPECIAL

The PS2 is almost here!!! We've got just one more month before the big U.S. release, so next issue you can expect mega coverage of the hot new system. We'll have a pre-launch guide, packed with all the info you need to get ready for the big event, such as: the final launch game lineup, our "must-buy" recommendations, our analysis of the U.S. unit and much more!

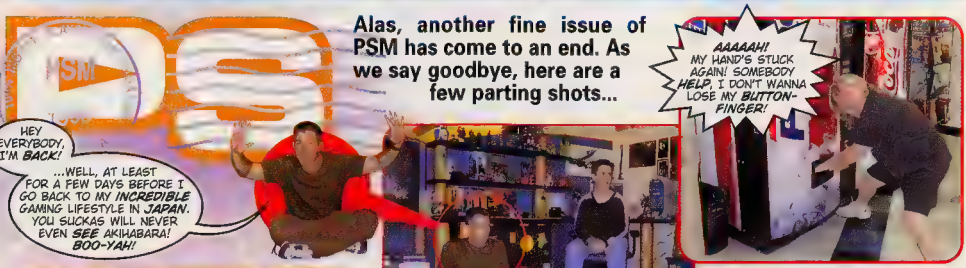
PARASITE EVE 2

We've been a little thin on the strategies the last couple issues, but next month we'll be back on track with an amazing blowout of Parasite Eve 2! We'll show you where to find every item, solve every puzzle and unlock every secret of this hot new sequel!

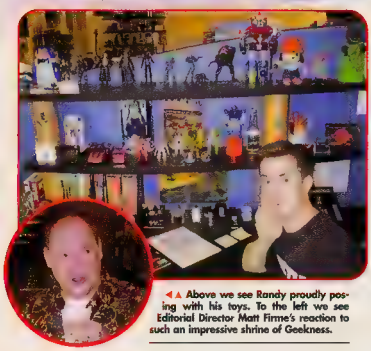
PS2 SPORTS GAME BLOWOUT!

All the latest on EA Sports' smokin' titles, like Madden 2001, plus your first look at 989 Studios' PlayStation2 launch lineup, including FaceOff, GameBreaker and GameDay 2001! Which football franchise will take the early lead on the PS2? We'll get a good idea in just 30 short days!

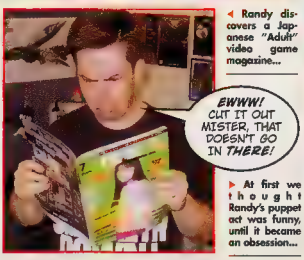
Alas, another fine issue of PSM has come to an end. As we say goodbye, here are a few parting shots...


HEY EVERYBODY, I'M BACK!
...WELL, AT LEAST FOR A FEW DAYS BEFORE I GO BACK TO MY INCREDIBLE GAMING LIFESTYLE IN JAPAN. YOU SUCKAS WILL NEVER EVEN SEE AKIHABARA! BOO-YAH!
AAAAAH! MY HAND'S STUCK AGAIN! SOMEBODY HELP, I DON'T WANNA LOSE MY BUTTON-FINGER!
Max returns to visit, but we gave away his chair.

▲ An hour later, Emergency Medical Technicians arrived and convinced Bill to let go of the Pepsi.

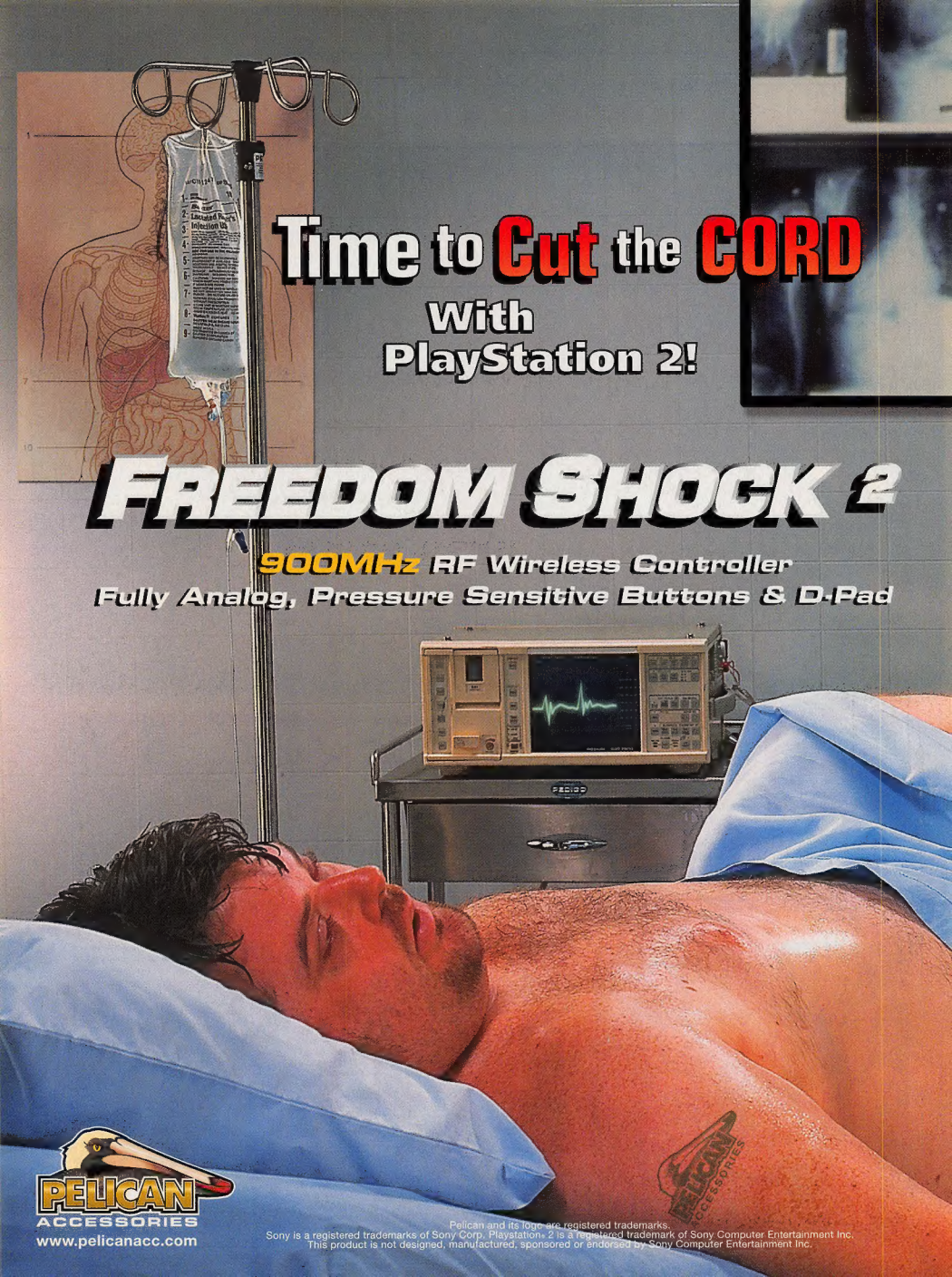


◄▲ Above we see Randy proudly posing with his toys. To the left we see Editorial Director Matt Firme's reaction to such an impressive shrine of Geekness.



◄ Randy discovers a Japanese "Adult" video game magazine...

► At first we thought Randy's puppet act was funny, until it became an obsession...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